



SARAWAK

A GENTLEMAN'S VICTORY FOR TAIB MAHMUD

JAMES RITCHIE



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Perpustakaan Negara
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Dedicated to all those who strive for the truth.



FOREWORD

The recent crisis in Sarawak in which a small majority of the State Assemblymen decided to oppose the leadership of Datuk Patinggi Taib Mahmud by 28 out of 48 members, had led to a State election, the results of which had already been known. Datuk Taib was returned as Chief Minister and he has now resumed leadership of the party. Let us wish him luck.

James Ritchie decided to write a book on Sarawak politics following the event of 15 April 1987, and it is obvious that he has taken a lot of trouble to give the historical and political background of Sarawak.

Sarawak has a mixed population of one and a half million people, the majority of whom are the Dayaks, and next come the Chinese and Malays. Each community is divided not so much on racial background as on their inert interests in their own welfare.

The Dayaks are the indigenous people but they lead a simple tribal existence with hardly any political or business interests, but a few are English-educated and aware of their right and are trying to assert it with the backing of their people who form the racial majority. The Chinese are holding on to their business dominance in the State through politics, while the Malays, on the other hand, are honestly conscious of their political right. They were the first to demonstrate their absolute confidence in the Independence of Sarawak through Malaysia.

The growth of their political consciousness started way back in 1946 when the last member of the Brooke dynasty, Rajah Sir Charles Vyner-Brooke, announced in a proclamation his decision to cede Sarawak to the British Crown.

Hitherto the Sarawak Malays looked up to Brooke as their Rajah, and this renunciation of Sarawak's rights

without consulting them hurt their pride very deeply. The young patriots made a vow to stop this take-over of Sarawak by the British Crown. They refused to co-operate with the new Government under Whitehall and for three years their anti-cessionist activities seethed and festered.

The Sibu-based Gerakan Pemuda Melayu decided to fight an open rebellion and started off by assassinating the Governor, Mr Duncan Stewart. When he visited Sibu on 3 December 1949, a youth, 19 years of age, Rosli bin Dhoby, drew his kris and, lunging forward with a sudden movement, killed the Governor outright. Several men were charged with Rosli, among whom were Morsidi bin Sidek, Bujang bin Suntong and Awan Ramli bin Haji Matsaruddin, and they had to pay the penalty with their lives.

That was the first sacrifice made in the name and cause of Sarawak's freedom. Since that time it has always been the Malays who have taken a leading part in the political movement in Sarawak. They are a minority, nevertheless their activity has been in the forefront of the political struggle of Sarawak.

As I have said the Chinese were interested from an economic and business angle and the Dayaks on their right as the indigenous people of Sarawak, but on the whole, if they were to combine forces it would be a sure guarantee for peace, well-being and stability of Sarawak for all time. So it was that when they joined Malaysia they did so as a combined force.

Out of consideration for the Dayaks, a man of their community was appointed the first Chief Minister, but he was expelled by the Assembly. Another Dayak was appointed to take his place. He was found incapable of grappling with the political situation, and so a qualified Malay was appointed who became the Chief Minister for eleven years. He was Datuk Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub who was later made Yang Dipertua Negeri, Sarawak. His nephew Datuk Taib Mahmud took his place as Chief Minister.

This is the sixth year of Datuk Taib's appointment as Chief Minister of Sarawak. There was to be a big celebration to mark the occasion on 28 March 1987, but instead, a crisis broke out which led to the election of new members of the Assembly.

Sarawak is rich in minerals, timber and other jungle products and there is a lot of hidden wealth in the State which one day will surface for the benefit of Malaysia. Datuk Taib is well-equipped and well-qualified to give the leadership to the State. He is an ardent believer in a joint political front for Sarawak. He has worked hard, visiting places and working his way into the hearts of the people. The time will come when he will have to give way to another successor, and he is aware of it; but such time has not yet arrived.

In addition to his political interests, he has been a great help to me in my Muslim welfare work, of which he is the Vice-President of PERKIM and the leader of BI NA, an affiliate of PERKIM in Sarawak. He is also the Vice-President of the Regional Islamic Organisation of South-East Asia and the Pacific (RISEAP) which helps to bolster the morale of Muslim minority in the region of Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

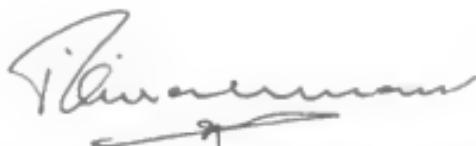
Like every political leader, Datuk Taib is not free from political jealousies within the party. Young James Ritchie has much to tell his readers about the Chief Minister's problems, and he took pains to relate what he knew of the trouble from within with unbiased frankness.

It would take much time for me to comment on what the author has said, but the reader is free to exercise his judgment as to what is right and what is wrong. But it was young James who is courageous enough to come forward and give his impartial version of the situation.

James Ritchie grew up in Kedah and was educated at the Sultan Abdul Hamid College. His father Datuk John Ritchie was the Chief Police Officer of Kedah and Perlis. During Datuk Kalong Ningkan's time when the political situation in Sarawak was rather disturbing, the government decided to send Datuk John Ritchie as C.P.O. of

Sarawak and young James accompanied his father. He grew up there, and as he grew older he took up journalism as a member of the New Straits Times Press. When his father left Sarawak, James remained behind and is there to this day. One can say James is well-versed with Sarawak politics.

His book *Sarawak: A Gentleman's Victory* will surely serve the fancy of those interested in East and West Malaysia politics. I heartily congratulate James for his good work in the cause of Sarawak.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent 'T' at the beginning.

Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj

Penang,
26 May 87.

INTRODUCTION

I have written this little book at the request of many "gentlemen politicians" who believe that come what may, truth will prevail. And this is exactly what happened in the State Elections on 15-16 April 1987.

The truth is that there is no place for communal politics in Sarawak. There is no place for the get-rich-quick politician. There is no place for the materialist.

I hope that my account of the 38-day crisis leading to the triumphant return of Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud for a third term as Chief Minister will lead to two things. First, that it will deter the self-centred from resorting to unethical means to capture power and second, that it will serve as a reminder to the younger politicians that the truth will prevail always.

I once asked Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud: "Datuk, I have seen you at work. You seem to be like a man determined to lead Sarawak into a new age. It may be a difficult task because it is not easy to change attitudes. How are you able to communicate with the people?" Datuk Patinggi Taib smiled: "I have never expected anything from the *rakyat* except that they allow me to serve them. But I also have a dream for the Sarawakian," he replied, "My style may differ from others, but at least I have the belief and conviction that what I am doing is for the best for

our multi-racial State. But never forget, the essence of reaching the people is for me to tell the facts as they are." Yes. Datuk Patinggi Taib has spoken. Sarawak seeks the truth. The people have placed their trust in the Chief Minister and allowed him to speak for them for yet another term.

My sincere thanks to *The People's Mirror* and the Sarawak State Information Department (for the use of photographs):

- .. Mr. William Wei, former general manager of the *Borneo Post* (for his excellent advice);
- .. The "special group" of the State Assemblymen (for inside information);
- .. Mr. Felix Abisheganaden, my former news editor, for giving "direction" to my efforts, and
- .. All my friends in the media who exchanged tips with me on the "goings-on" during the election campaign.

James Ritchie

15 May 1987

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BARJASA – Barisan Rakyat Jati Sarawak

BN – Barisan Nasional

CEC – Central Executive Committee

DAP – Democratic Action Party

MP – Member of Parliament

PAJAR – Parti Jati Rakyat

PANAS – Parti Nasional Sarawak

PBB – Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu

PBDS – Parti Bansya Dayak Sarawak

PERMAS – Persatuan Rakyat Malaysia Sarawak

PESAKA – Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak

RTM – Radio Television Malaysia

SAPO – Sarawak People's Organization

SNAP – Sarawak National Party

SUPP – Sarawak United Peoples' Party

USNA – United Sarawak Natives' Association

USNO – United Sabah National Organization

YB – Yang Berhormat

CONTENTS

Foreword

Introduction

List of Abbreviations

Brief Political History of the Sarawak Barisan

| | |
|---|----|
| Nasional | 1 |
| Cloak and Dagger Tactics | 11 |
| Plan to Oust Taib | 20 |
| Taib Dissolves State Legislative Assembly | 31 |
| Timber Scare over Screening of Licences | 37 |
| Confusion in Rebel Camp | 42 |
| Taib Challenges Rahman Ya'kub | 48 |
| The Fire of Dayakism | 53 |
| Taib Wins: A Gentleman's Glory | 57 |
| <i>Appendices</i> | 67 |



Chapter 1

BRIEF POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE SARAWAK BARISAN NASIONAL

When Sarawak attained Independence in 1963, there were a number of political parties which had already been formed. The giants then were the Iban-based Sarawak Nasional Party (SNAP) and multi-ethnic but predominantly Chinese SUPP (Sarawak United People's Party). There were two Malay-based parties called Parti Negara Sarawak (Panas) formed in 1960 and Barisan Rakyat Jati Sarawak (Barjasa) formed in 1962. At that time the young and idealistic secretary-general of Barjasa, Taib Mahmud, felt that only a merger of the two parties could strengthen the position of the Malays. So he worked together with Panas President, Abang Ikhwan Zaini, and after three years in 1967 both parties merged to form Parti Bumiputera.

By 1970, the Sarawak Alliance comprised of three political parties - Parti Bumiputera, the Iban-dominated Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak (Pesaka) and the Sarawak Chinese Association (which was later dissolved in 1974). At this time all the parties except the SUPP had joined the Alliance at sometime or other. In the 1970 elections, Parti Bumiputera secured 13 seats. SUPP decided to team up with Parti Bumiputera and formed the Government on 7 July 1970. Two men - former SUPP Chairman Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui

and Secretary-General Datuk Amar Stephen Yong Kuet Tze - were instrumental in the formation of the partnership with Sarawak Alliance, thus enabling Tun Rahman Ya'kub to become Chief Minister of Sarawak. The coalition had 26 seats.

In 1972, Pesaka decided to merge with Parti Bumiputera. A year later in May 1973, Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) was formed. The PBB and SUPP were the first two Sarawak coalition parties who joined the Barisan Nasional on 1 June 1974 under the Chairmanship of Tun Abdul Razak. Tun Abdul Rahman Ya'kub headed the new Sarawak two-party coalition which participated in the 24 August General Elections winning 15 of the 24 parliamentary seats and 30 of the 48 state seats.

The Iban-based Sarawak National Party (SNAP) which was in the Opposition at that time won all the other nine parliamentary and 18 state seats. They had campaigned against the leadership of Tun Rahman and alleged "nepotism and corruption" promising to build a "Sarawak for the Sarawakians" for the *rakyat*. This appealed to a wide section of the population.

However by the middle of 1975, negotiations were underway for SNAP to join the coalition. In February, General Planning and Socio-Economic Research Minister, Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, indicated in an announcement that there was a possibility that SNAP would join the coalition.

A month later, SNAP's Secretary-General, Datuk Leo Moggie, said the party had agreed in

principle to join the Barisan Nasional both at State and Federal levels. On 20 June 1976, they were accepted into the coalition.

SNAP had grown in strength because it was in the opposition but later it stated that one of the main reasons it joined the Barisan Nasional was because it believed in political co-operation for security in the region. There was also fear that if they stayed too long in the Opposition, the Iban faction would be drawn closer to the communist terrorists.

As expected the three-party coalition won 23 out of the 24 parliamentary seats in the 1978 election with the Chinese-based Sarawak People's Organisation (SAPO) the sole opposition winner. The following year the Barisan Nasional again won a landslide victory in the State election despite the formation of a new political party called PAJAR.

On 26 March 1981, Datuk Taib took over as Chief Minister of Sarawak from his uncle Tun Rahman. By then Datuk Taib had served 13 years at Federal level while Tun Rahman was Chief Minister for 11 years. Tun Rahman was installed as the Yang Dipertua Negeri of Sarawak the same year.

In the 1982 General Election and the 1983 State General Election, the Barisan Nasional under Datuk Taib again romped home with landslide victories. However, the 1980s also saw the split of SNAP starting with its own party triennial election in 1981 in which its President Datuk Amar Dunstan Endawie decided to step down for reasons best known to him. Some say that he was

"asked" to step down by a powerful political figure. This started a leadership crisis with Datuk Leo challenging Datuk Amar James Wong Kim Min for the top post.

The James Wong faction had appealed to the Moggie faction to allow the former one term as party President because he had served the party loyally for many years.

However, the Moggie faction argued that since SNAP was an Iban-based party, its leader must be a Dayak. Moggie and all his men lost all posts in the contest. Datuk Endawie, the Malaysian High Commissioner to New Zealand, had supported Datuk James Wong. The rift in SNAP had begun.

Within one year, a Dayak loyalist, Datuk Daniel Tajem, was caught campaigning for a former SNAP leader Datuk Edwin Tangkun, who had stood as an Independent, contrary to party wishes against Wellington Rufus Nanang in the Parliamentary General Election.

The following year, he was sacked and decided to form a new party called Parti Bansya Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) or Dayak National Party. This split SNAP into two factions. PBDS wanted to participate in the Barisan Nasional but SNAP was adamant that they stay out. Datuk Taib then decided to draw up a special formula called the "Barisan Plus" formula where PBDS would be part of the Barisan Nasional coalition.

Datuk Taib had explained that he drew up this formula because he felt that the Dayaks should not be left out of the mainstream of development. After all Datuk Taib had been one of the architects of participation in government. For that, Datuk

Wong came out strongly against Datuk Taib. However despite the friction, SNAP did not oppose PBDS' entry into the Barisan Nasional after they won six seats in the December 1983 State general election.

A year later Datuk Taib was to discover a plot to topple him. On 13 January 1985, Datuk Taib revealed, at a 15,000-strong rally at the Kuching International Airport, the plan to topple him. Earlier there was a bomb hoax at the welcome rally. But this did not deter Datuk Taib who revealed that the group who wanted to topple him were people known to him who believed in "politics of hunger for power" as opposed to his "politics of development".

Later that month, 44 of the 48 assemblymen signed a pledge of loyalty to Datuk Taib at the State Secretariat at Petra Jaya. On 23 January, Tun Rahman stated that he would act if he was implicated in the political developments in the State. A week later Tun Rahman hinted at quitting soon. His term as Sarawak's Head of State was to end on 1 April the same year. Datuk Taib later picked Datuk Patinggi Haji Ahmad Zaidi Adruce as the Yang Dipertua Negeri. It is understood that at that time a Rahman loyalist Datuk Haji Noor Tahir was one of the possible candidates for Governorship. Looking back, Datuk Taib can count his lucky stars that he made the right choice.

In the May State Legislative Assembly sitting, Taib's detractors began a series of criticisms against his leadership style. That was when Datuk Taib announced that a "Gang of Three"

(comprising three state assemblymen who criticized him at every turn and opportunity) were his main detractors.

Winding up the debate on the motion of thanks to the Yang Dipertua Negeri, Taib said that the plot to oust him was a "classical communist strategy for take-over". He pointed out that the group's six strategies were to:

1. Isolate the leader;
2. Direct a smearing campaign or character assassination;
3. Divide the people into suspicious camps;
4. Challenge the basis of a leader's legitimacy for power;
5. Spread propaganda of the growing strength of the challengers;
6. Harass the leaders.

Prior to his speech, Taib had been a victim of unfair criticisms from a pro-Rahman newspaper. During his speech Taib touched on the subject stating:

The (New) *Straits Times* called me debonair, I don't know if I deserve it or not because I am always polite to people except when I get heated in a debate.... And I am sorry to say that people have been used to saying those things as one could have done through propaganda of the (*Sarawak Tribune*).

He accused the paper of being used to criticize his leadership. He added:

It has never been so explicitly put in any newspaper in this country as far as I can remember where people just plunge into generalization of character of any leader and

try to compare one leader with another and say how this leader is inferior to the other.

In April 1986 Datuk Salleh Jafaruddin announced his resignation from the PBB. He also vacated the Oya state forcing a by-election. This also prompted other Taib detractors to announce their resignation from the party.

At the Oya by-election, Taib was represented by his "proxy" Wan Madzhi Wan Mahdzar while for the first time Tun Rahman exposed himself and led a procession of Datuk Salleh supporters through the town of Oya to the nomination centre.

With Tun Rahman campaigning for Datuk Salleh, the war was now in the open. However, despite several interviews, the former Chief Minister did not openly say he was returning to politics. A month later, there was another state by-election at Batang Ai following the death of SNAP's Sylvester Langit in a road accident in Lubuk Antu during the Gawai festivity in June.

The PBDS openly supported Mikai anak Mandau, an Independent against Snap's Albert Klinsing anak Manau, the Barisan Nasional candidate.

There were widespread protests but PBDS ignored them. Mikai beat Klinsing creating a further rift between the two rivalling parties. That August, the Parliamentary General Election was called and the Barisan Nasional again scored an overwhelming victory. But with that the die had been cast.

By then Taib began to realize that PBDS was not all that sincere in their intentions. Things

began to move fast. The bad elements within PBDS were "ignored". Taib was disappointed that his Deputy Chief Minister in charge of Agriculture, Datuk Tajem, had not carried out his functions according to his expectations.

Taib was disappointed that instead of touring the State to help alleviate the problems of the larger rural population, much of Datuk Tajem's "work" was politicking. Taib felt betrayed because he (Taib) had gone out of the way to help PBDS and Datuk Tajem, in particular, with his "Barisan Plus" formula.



*Datuk Taib Mahmud
Chief Minister of Sarawak*



Before the "rebellion" — a pledge of loyalty to Datuk Taib

Chapter 2

CLOAK AND DAGGER TACTICS

7 March 1987 will go down in the history of Sarawak as a turning point in the political history of this State of approximately 1.5 million people. On that day, Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud was at the coastal town of Mukah where he was laying the foundation stone of the \$1.8 million Mukah community hall - the pride of this Fifth Division town. In a powerful speech, he warned the *rakyat* to be aware of communal division and factional politics. According to a source:

The *rakyat* have been urged to stand up and oppose those who advocate communal division and factional politics.

Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud said that such a division in the community and the constant fighting among the people of the various communities would not benefit the state but instead destroy it.

At the foundation stone-laying ceremony of the \$1.8 million Mukah community hall here that afternoon, the Chief Minister gave the recent example of a country destroyed by the people whose narrow-mindedness caused them to think only for their own community and not others.

A country, he described, as once a

"heaven" and much better developed than Singapore, was now destroyed and left to waste. Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud said that he was not prepared to see the various communities in the state "butchered" as it were but instead ways must be found to get these people into a spirit of helping one another for their mutual progress and benefit.

Touching on the politics in the state, the Chief Minister said although politics here were communal in nature, no single community in the state was strong enough to form an administration that would be able to command a majority or be stable enough. Political parties had sprouted like mushrooms, he said.

But the maturity of the people had ensured that any political party harping on the cause of a single community was doomed. But parties, championing for multi-racial unity, like the PBB, SUPP and SNAP more recently were gaining strength.

The People's Mirror (8 March 1987)

The *rakyat*, he said, must stand up and oppose those who sought to divide the people. And he pledged to do all in his power to preserve the unity.

While Taib was delivering sound words of encouragement, little did he realize that he was to be the target of a massive, "below-the-belt" plot to oust him and others who had devoted their lives towards preserving harmony. The plan to unseat Taib who sincerely believes in

the brotherhood of man was ashamedly exposed over a tense 38-day period. At times, the plot by the opposition took on the under-cover tones of a James Bond thriller. But as in all thrillers, the hero survives. In the case of the 38-day crisis which is told in sequences (as it happened) in the following pages, Taib not only withstood the "cloak-and-dagger" tactics but emerged victorious, and stronger than before. With this strength, this man of the people said he is prepared to forgive. He has vowed to rally all sections of the people to build a united Sarawak. Taib sincerely hopes that those who have used communal politics for personal gain - would eventually join him in this worthy task.

Back to 7 March, in Mukah the Chief Minister announced plans to open up 500,000 acres of land under the mini-estate concept creating jobs for more than 50,000 people by the year 2,000 and also establish three mini estates in the Subis Bintulu area costing about \$30 million each. Together with Datuk Taib were two cabinet Ministers: Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Daniel Tajem anak Miri, the Minister in charge of Agriculture, and Datuk Edward Jeli anak Belayong, the Minister for Land Development. The former is Deputy President of PBDS, while the latter, his bitter rival, is the former Deputy President of SNAP. Both ministers could never see eye-to-eye due to party rivalry. However Datuk Taib thought it best that the two Iban leaders, should come together in the interest of their community.

But mischief was in the air and if Taib

Mahmud thought that he was doing them a favour, he was in for a real surprise for at this juncture there was an unusually large exodus of politicians to Kuala Lumpur. As soon as the Mukah function was open, the two Ministers were on their way to the Federal capital. While Taib was suspicious that some people were up to no good, he could not crystallize their plot. Under normal circumstances the most the Sarawak politicians could do was hold a party in Kuala Lumpur. Not much more. But conditions at this point of time were different.

On the morning of 8 March, I was on my way to Kuala Lumpur for a day trip to watch the final round of the Benson and Hedges Malaysian Open Golf Championship at the Kelab Golf Negara Subang. It was a battle to watch. Waking up, after a long Saturday night to catch the 6 a.m. flight, MH 502, to Kuala Lumpur was no fun. But the possibility of a good flight aroused the golf enthusiast to accept that challenge. As luck would have it, I met an assemblyman who was once in favour and had enjoyed the best. As we spoke, the subject of Taib Mahmud cropped up. I recall his words: "Taib must go - we must create an incident so that the Federal leaders will pay attention to the group." He spoke on the first attempt to topple Taib in January 1985 which failed and said that the only way to succeed this time was to be more positive about the whole mission. We discussed Taib's good and weak points. After a while it began to dawn on me that what he said could be clues to a jigsaw puzzle I had been trying to put together over the

past few weeks. There had been certain comments and statements made in a local newspaper and it appeared to be building up to something big.

When I asked him what he was going to do in Kuala Lumpur, he said: "Just to look up some printers to publish a book." Possibly true, because a member of the group was about to publish a book on his life story. The chat was enlightening but I dismissed his story as part of the Opposition propaganda which is normal. After all, verbal threats against Taib Mahmud were nothing new. This reminded me of an incident when I was covering the Oya by-election on 2 July 1986. I was at the counting centre at about 8.30 p.m. on 2 July 1986 when an opposition member, backing Independent candidate Datuk Salleh Jafaruddin announced confidently that the Barisan Nasional was finished and it was the beginning of the end for Taib Mahmud. A Singapore writer was present possibly to collect notes for a book. But the opposite occurred when it was the Barisan Nasional candidate Wan Madzihi Wan Mahdzar who won by a handsome 1755 votes. Was this assemblyman to be taken seriously? After all they had tried to topple Taib Mahmud in late January 1985. I recalled an interview with former Chief Minister Tun Abdul Rahman Ya'kub in January 1987 when he (Tun Rahman) said that he regarded Taib Mahmud as a son.

But when asked if he was prepared to reconcile with Taib, he said: "It was Taib who organized the massive rally in 1985, not me...." It

was a hint. The elderly statesman, who is Taib's uncle, appeared forgiving but apparently bitter. With the fast political developments, the airport chat with the assemblyman became particularly interesting. Coincidentally, the assemblyman met up with a colleague from the Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB).

Their meeting appeared cordial as they shook hands. It seemed that their trip to Kuala Lumpur was coincidental. Both were travelling first-class.

On arrival at the Subang International Airport, I thumbed a lift from the first assemblyman. A car was waiting for the two politicians.

Innocently I got into the car for a lift to the entrance of the golf club. Only later did I realize that I had stumbled upon the biggest story of my career. I prepared some notes for a story for my newspaper on Monday, 9 March, believing that something big could be happening. On checking with sources, I came upon plans on how the Opposition would move to topple Taib Mahmud. I gathered that the group was becoming "intolerant" of Taib because he had recently zeroed in on Wan Madzhi Wan Mahdzar, considered his "proxy" and "blue-eyed boy" who had won the Oya by-election on a Barisan Nasional ticket before joining the rebels. The Opposition group had accused Taib of being greedy for power, a "hypocritical champion" and "unholy" because he dabbled with *bomohs*. Among the methods I assumed the opposition group would use were:

1. Frighten the "Yang Berhormats" in the

Barisan Nasional to believe that Taib Mahmud would victimize them if they had connections with the "old guard". This could be particularly related to dealings with timber concessions.

2. If they manage to convince half the "Yang Berhormats", then they would have created sufficient resentment for a rebellion. Those who would be dissatisfied would include Cabinet Ministers and Assistant Ministers with timber concessions in all four State Barisan Nasional component parties.

3. To re-start the newspaper propaganda war.

4. Drum up more support in the meantime and using new candidates as opposed to the "Gang of Three" members to criticize Taib through the newspapers.

5. If the power of a few of the "old guard" in the Taib cabinet was curtailed, they may also switch camps.

6. Deliberately get the newly-formed Persatuan Rakyat Malaysia Sarawak (PERMAS) members to associate with PBDS leaders, particularly Datuk Daniel Tajem to create suspicion.

7. Whip up enough anti-Taib support at Federal level.

The opposition group's ultimate plan was to go for a no-confidence motion. (However the Sarawak State Legislative Assembly sitting was only due to sit after the fasting month and there was still time for Taib to remedy the situation. Or so he thought!) All these findings were typed for a story and kept in a file. But things began to develop very rapidly. The local pro-Taib news-

paper, *The People's Mirror* carried two front-page articles headlined: "Cabinet Shake-up likely" (5 March) and "Screen on timber licences" (6 March). Trouble was brewing even though a rebellion did not appear immediately imminent.

A State cabinet reshuffle is expected to take place just before the State Elections, highly placed sources told *The People's Mirror* here today.

The reshuffle, according to the sources had been described as a 'major' one and would involve a number of key state ministers.

It was, however, not immediately known as to who in particular would be involved in the shake-up. This comes as a positive indication of a state election which according to political observers could be held next year.

The sources however did not rule out that 'senior' members of the Cabinet could be among those who could be moved in the reshuffle.

The People's Mirror (5 March 1987)



Datuk Taib at Mukah on 7 March 1987. On his right is
Datuk Daniel Tajem and on extreme right is Datuk
Edward Jeli

PLAN TO OUST TAIB

On the evening of 9 March, I visited one of my political sources and showed him my analysis of the plot. We agreed that this was the plan. But he also felt that the group would be foolhardy enough to try at this stage. I thought otherwise but kept my suspicions to myself. Taib Mahmud's detractors were not about to give up and would be going for the big drive to oust him. But when? That was the question. It was to be a long and uneasy night for me as I wanted to file a story but dared not as my "facts" had not been confirmed.

Tuesday, 10 March was another anxious day for me. The newspapers had arrived late. At the office I received a telephone call from a friend informing me that something "big" was brewing. A front-page story in the *Sarawak Tribune* that morning headlined "Quit Shock. Four Ministers and three Assistant Ministers resign."

Four cabinet Ministers and three assistant ministers have resigned from the Sarawak State cabinet, it was learnt last night.

They are Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Daniel Tajem, who also holds the Agriculture and Community Development portfolio, of PBDS; Minister for Land Development, Datuk Edward Jeli of SNAP; Minister for Environment and Tourism, Datuk Noor Tahir and

Minister for Social Development, Datuk Haf-sah Harun, both of PBB.

The Assistant Ministers are Encik Gramong Juna (Land Resources) of PBDS, Encik Michael Ben (Culture and Sport) of SNAP and Encik Hollis Tini (Welfare) of SUPP.

This development in the state politics is not entirely unexpected, according to observers here because for sometime already there have been signs of patience running out with the Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Taib Mahmud's style of leadership in government and in co-ordinating the Barisan Nasional component parties.

The Chief Minister is known to have been having increasingly opened differences with the PBDS, a component party in the State Barisan Nasional.

SNAP, another component party of the Barisan Nasional, is also not happy with the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister is not immediately available for comment.

Sarawak Tribune (10 March 1987)

There was no by-line to the article. Was the report authentic?

On reading the newspaper report, I sped to the residence of the Chief Minister at Jalan Bako and arrived at about 9 am. There was a large gathering of pro-Taib politicians and associates, some dressed in full suit or Baju Kebangsaan. I was the only reporter there. My first instinct was to inform my sister paper, *The Malay Mail* in Kuala Lumpur, to hold some space for a "hot story". I was

running out of time. The cabinet meeting was just over. I barged into the conference room. Fortunately, the Chief Minister gave me a five-minute interview. The story was relayed to Kuala Lumpur. This time the rumours were real. The move to topple Taib Mahmud was on.

The minutes ticked by fast. The remaining members of the State Cabinet, comprising Taib loyalists had met and made a decision to call for a fresh election. There was no other alternative but to go to the *rakyat* and to allow them to decide on their political destiny. At 11.45 a.m., the Chief Minister accompanied by the remaining two Sarawak deputy Chief Ministers, Tan Sri Datuk Amar Sim Kheng Hong and Datuk Alfred Jabu anak Numpang, arrived at the office of the Yang Dipertua Negeri at the Dewan Undangan Negeri (State Legislative Assembly) complex in Petra Jaya. The Chief Minister was carrying a red file.

He looked like he meant business. At 1.30 p.m. he appeared and immediately held a press conference. Smiling confidently all the way, and flanked by Tan Sri Sim on his right and Datuk Jabu on his left, he revealed the details of the plot to topple him. This he said was orchestrated by an "invisible but rich hand".

An invisible hand calling the shots, orchestrated an intriguing political plot to topple the present State government.

This was the feeling of Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud when he called for an urgent press conference today.

Citing the hush-hush talks which were

held last in a hotel (reliably learnt as the Ming Court Hotel) in Kuala Lumpur, the Chief Minister said that the mystery fashion of the underground plot did tickle him but the outcome was not surprising.

The People's Mirror (11 March 1987)

He said that he had learnt of several Assemblymen taking off to Kuala Lumpur (these include the seven who had been reported to have resigned) adequately furnished with all paid expenses including air-fare and accommodation.

The meeting was so secretive that there were even guards and calls were screened. When asked whether the former Sarawak Yang Dipertua Negeri could have been the one behind this move, the Chief Minister said "yes".

Taib also spoke of the "timber connection" revealing that a group of wealthy politicians had used "timber money" in their attempt to topple the government. Taib said a "big shot" was involved.

While Datuk Taib prepared for the election battle in Kuching, it was a different scenario in Kuala Lumpur. A large number of State assemblymen and several other Sarawak politicians including Members of Parliament had arrived in the Federal capital in batches. They had gathered at the Ming Court Hotel with plans of their own. Originally there were 28 assemblymen, but one did not attend the meeting. The "all expenses paid" (first class air ticket included) trip to Kuala Lumpur was not an informal get-together but was more than that. It was to be a "toppling move" – and Datuk Taib was the object. Several sessions

were held between Tun Rahman loyalists and the SNAP dissidents who had left to join the group in Kuala Lumpur. There are different versions as to the reason for the SNAP influx to Kuala Lumpur. One theory is that only "one or two" leaders knew of the real plan. Others were just told to attend a SNAP meeting in Kuala Lumpur to discuss urgent matters. At least two SNAP state assemblymen were told that the meeting was being held to demand for the expulsion of PBDS from the Barisan Nasional. They took the bait. The mood of Sarawak politicians at Ming Court was euphoric on the morning of 10 March. There was a hive of activity as dozens of reporters flocked to the hotel as the press were led to believe that Sarawak was plunged into a political crisis and could become "another Sabah". The following day the *New Straits Times* carried a front-page article headlined: "Taib gets ultimatum: step down or be voted out". Former Chief Minister and Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Abdul Rahman Ya'kub was coincidentally in Kuala Lumpur. The *New Straits Times* quoted: "Former Sarawak Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Abdul Rahman Ya'kub was also in town and it is learned that he briefed Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba on the political situation in the State over a round of golf". The scene of the golfing stint was Genting Highlands. A day before that, the group also had dinner with the Deputy Prime Minister. At the Ming Court closed-door meeting were the rebels and MPs such as Deputy Education Minister Haji Bujang Ulis from PBB and SNAP Central Executive Committee (CEC) mem-

ber, Ting Ling Kiew. The "hush-hush" talks were held in a hotel room which had been converted into their "operations centre".

At this point attention should be drawn to a statement by Tun Rahman Ya'kub in March 1985 in which he categorically announced his retirement from politics. The unsigned document was issued to the press by Tun Rahman Ya'kub before his lawyer, following allegations that he was involved in a plot to topple the government. The statement added:

It has been brought to the attention of His Excellency that various statements have appeared in the press the effect that there is being a scheme, to which it is alleged or implied that His excellency is a party, to bring about his return to office as Chief Minister.

His Excellency wishes it to be known that he has no knowledge of such scheme. His excellency further wishes it to be known that he has no desire to return to the scene of party politics. His Excellency has served the Federation and the State for many years in various ministerial offices, the last of which was that of Chief Minister of Sarawak, an office which he held for eleven years. His Excellency relinquished this office on his own will and upon doing so, was appointed Yang Dipertua Negeri Sarawak by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong. Upon the completion of his duties as Yang Dipertua Negeri it is not the intention of His Excellency to return to the scene of party politics, or enter any contest for ministerial office.

Ironically, it was almost exactly two years later in Kuala Lumpur that Tun Rahman would announce his return to politics.

It was as a result of this statement that I asked Tun Rahman during the 23 January interview in Kuching (see Appendices) whether he was able to devote more time with his family since he left politics. He agreed that he had spent most of his time with his family. He also said that he had spent much time in uplifting his knowledge in religious studies. He had also completed a book but was now "updating" some of the events. Was there any meaning in the word "updating", I thought to myself. I therefore asked why he had not put a stop to rumours that he (Tun Rahman) was making a come-back to politics. He replied that he could not put a stop to the rumours. "Some people choose not to believe (that he will not return to politics) and those who choose not to believe will multiply the rumours," he said. He did not regard politics "as my life, as my blood" because it was part and parcel of one's contribution with one's own wish. He added: "... politics is not my only vocation, it is not the all important if one looks at politics in the ordinary sense of the word where you must contest, you must hold position." However, he continued: "But in a wider sense, expressing views of one's country where anybody who feels responsible for his country, one will continue to be interested." I asked if he was linked to the formation of a new party called PERMAS and whether he was interested in making a comeback to politics. His reply was typically

non-committal: "I will answer that question when I have to cross the bridge." I should have taken the hint.

Back to the Ming Court meeting. Among the last group to join the rebels at the meeting at 8.10 pm was PBDS, led by Datuk Leo Moggie anak Irok considered by some as a "moderate" and his deputy Datuk Daniel Tajem, considered by some as the radical member of the group.

The closed-door meeting apparently discussed cabinet postings, positions and "who-gets-what". Some say they even discussed who was going to take over the various government statutory bodies and corporations. It never occurred to them that Taib Mahmud would be bold enough to dissolve the assembly, though that was the only course of action he could take. Even as a PBDS member stood up and brought up the subject of this possibility he was asked to sit down. They had gambled with the idea that the Chief Minister would meekly surrender his powers following which there would be a further exodus of assemblymen to the rebel camp.

While the rebels were "dividing the spoils", Taib was already in Kuala Lumpur (despite a bomb scare) pushing ahead with his plans, and meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and briefed him on the political situation. The rebel camp had decided that former Minister for Forestry (under Tun Rahman Ya'kub) and later Environment and Tourism (under Taib), Datuk Haji Noor Tahir, be appointed Chief Minister designate to replace Taib. One member of the rebel group went as far as to say

that they were magnanimous enough to "bargain with Federal leaders" to allow Taib to be made an ambassador to a foreign nation. The only SUPP Chinese assemblyman in the group, David Tiong Chiong Chu, was to be made one of the deputy Chief Minister's designate. The only other Chinese assemblyman in the group was Sim Cho Nang, the Independent member for Engkilili. There was talk that provisions had been made for the Chief Minister designate Datuk Haji Noor to hold the post for a three-month period following which he would step down and call for a by-election. Tun Rahman Ya'kub was to be the choice candidate to replace him. There was a promise of governorship to one of the veteran "rebel" politicians. So united they were in their cause that they decided to call themselves the "Bersatu group".

The following day on 11 March, Datuk Haji Noor and his delegation flew back to Kuching in the hope of having an audience with the Yang Dipertua Negeri, Datuk Patinggi Haji Ahmad Zaidi Adruce. Such was the confidence of the rebel group who thought they had the whole affair wrapped up. But they could not make that vital appointment. Little did they know that the Yang Dipertua Negeri was already in Kuala Lumpur. Apart from their timing, their information was also wrong. They had made their first miscalculation. As they were united, so were Taib's loyalists.



Datuk Taib holds a press conference on 10 March revealing that "invisible but rich hands" had orchestrated the move to topple him



Tun Rahman makes his appearance at the Oya by-election in July 1986.

TAIB DISSOLVES STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

While the "Bersatu" group held their meeting the previous night, the Chief Minister announced that his group had agreed to the dissolution of the State Legislative Assembly. This message had been conveyed to the Prime Minister by Taib and his delegation. Yes, Taib had moved faster than the rebels could imagine. There was gloom in the rebel camp. The bubble had burst. This even prompted one of the Bersatu group leaders to say: "Tun Abdul Rahman Ya'kub was over-confident. He expected Taib to resign by today. Some of us told him Taib was a fighter but he said we were pessimistic." But Taib stuck to his decision and allowed the people to make the decision.

Sarawak is expected to go to the polls soon. As the Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Abdul Taib Mahmud sees it, 'it is the only way to solve the present crisis' in the State.

He said 'intrigue and counter-intrigue' would not achieve anything.

'I am not good at it and I would be ashamed to do it. We must go back to the people, let them be the judge,' he said in an interview.

New Straits Times (12 March 1987)

On the morning of Thursday 12 March, Taib appointed three new State Ministers – Abang

Johari Tun Abang Haji Openg, Encik Adenan Haji Satem and Datuk Amar James Wong Kim Min to replace the four "rebel" Ministers who had resigned. Four Assistant Ministers were appointed - Haji Wan Wahab Wan Sanusi, Ambrose Blikau, Ramsay Noel Jitam and Dr. Patau Rubis. They took their oath before the Yang Dipertua Negeri at the Lapau in Petra Jaya. Later in the afternoon at the Kuching Central Padang, Taib announced before a mammoth rally of about 6,000 the dissolution of the State Assembly to take effect on the following day, Friday 13 March. At the rally Taib openly criticized Tun Rahman Ya'kub. Ironically, it was two years ago, on 13 January 1985 that he addressed a rally of about 15,000 people at the Kuching International Airport following the exposure of the group's initial plan to topple Taib.

The same Thursday, the Bersatu group, in anticipation of the dissolution, indicated that they might apply for a court injunction to stop the State Election. This was the first indication that they were hesitant about going to the polls.

Friday, 13 March was another long day of battles. While the letter dissolving the State Assembly signed by the Yang Dipertua Negeri was handed to the State Election officer by the State Assembly's secretary, there was absolute frustration in the rebel camp for not having succeeded in preventing an election. The Bersatu group decided on their next course of action. The plan was to get the SNAP rebels to secure a quorum to hold an emergency Central Executive Committee (CEC) Meeting in Kuala Lumpur to announce

their withdrawal from the Barisan Nasional to prove that there was people power within the rebel group. All efforts were made to persuade or coax other SNAP's CEC members to attend the Kuala Lumpur meeting. Another MP attempted to win over SNAP patron and advisor, Sarawak's first Chief Minister Datuk Stephen Kalong Ningkan at his residence. While the CEC member went to Kuala Lumpur as an observer, the MP was not so lucky in his attempt because he got a long lecture on "SNAP ethics and on the constitution". Two journalists "bumped" into the MP while he was at the Ningkan residence. It was sheer embarrassment for the MP as we witnessed and heard the "long lecture" he received. The MP even tried to convince us that what he was doing was in the best interest of everyone. Fifteen minutes later he left, red-faced. It must have been a terrible blow to him because he had failed in his mission to win over Datuk Ningkan to the Opposition team. He left for Kuala Lumpur late that evening.

That night, the emergency meeting in Kuala Lumpur was without a quorum. Datuk Ningkan had also been personally involved in preventing some of the "fence sitters" from joining the other camp. The former Chief Minister also urged Tun Rahman Ya'kub to stay out of politics "for the sake of peace and harmony in the State". The illegal SNAP meeting which was chaired by Datuk Edward Jeli resolved to pull out of the Barisan Nasional. They resolved to withdraw support for the Chief Minister Datuk Taib Mahmud as leader of the State Barisan Nasional. The group

also expressed their loss of confidence in the leadership of SNAP president Datuk Amar James Wong.

On 14 March, a bright Saturday in Kuching saw SNAP countering the "rebel" CEC meeting in Kuala Lumpur with their own urgent meeting at the Kuching headquarters in Jalan Rubber in the early afternoon. The SNAP Kuching meeting, chaired by Datuk Amar Wong, resolved that the SNAP meeting in Kuala Lumpur was "not proper and was *ultra vires*" according to the Article 1 clause 2 of the SNAP constitution. As such it was illegal.

The Kuching meeting which was attended by at least 10 of the 20 CEC members sacked CEC member Wellington Rufus Nanang and suspended six others - Deputy President Datuk Edward Jeli, Secretary-General Datuk Joseph Balan Seling, Treasurer-General Paul Kuek, Michael Ben, Andrew Nyabe and Ting Ling Kiew. Four CEC members were appointed acting officials with Datuk Peter Tinggom replacing Datuk Jeli as Acting Deputy President, Justine anak Temenggong Jinggut in place of Datuk Balan Seling, Stanley Jugol in place of Mr. Kuek and Joseph and Temenggong Jinggut in place of Ernest Chua, SNAP publicity officer.

The meeting which was attended by at least 18 SNAP members including the 10 CEC members pledged to support the State Barisan Nasional under the leadership of Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Taib Mahmud and set up a disciplinary committee headed by Datuk Tinggom to investigate the recent political events leading

to SNAP rebel's move. It also resolved that no unauthorized persons could use the SNAP symbol unless permission was given in writing by the President himself.



New Minister Datuk Amar James Wong being
sworn in by the Yang di-Pertua Negeri Alfred

TIMBER SCARE OVER SCREENING OF LICENCES

As the picture became clearer, the real reasons for the move to topple Datuk Taib became more apparent. One of the motivating factors was "material and financial gain". Sources said that some form of inducement was made to encourage the few indecisive rebels to join the opposing camp. Most of them, if not all, travelling to attend the rebel meeting were given first-class air tickets and an undisclosed allowance for hotel, food and accommodation. Some say the allowance was \$800.00. But the promise of much more was the carrot that motivated the rebels.

However not all the rebels were totally behind the main group "in spirit and soul". The movements of the rebel assemblymen were closely checked. Some had "guards" standing watch outside their hotel rooms in case any of the Barisan Nasional members from Datuk Taib's camp approached them. They had their own telephone call answering service with escorts monitoring all calls. If the "escort" viewed the caller with suspicion, the normal answer would be: "YB (Yang Berhormat) is not in. I don't know where he has gone to," following which the phone line would go dead. The Opposition have however argued that the assemblymen were not held against their will. In fact there were some

denials in the newspapers.

But the fact remained that the whole affair was so veiled in secrecy that there was more to it than just a few hundred dollars. There was much more at stake. Later when it appeared that an election was imminent, two reliable PBDS sources said the value of each rebel went up to the tune of \$500,000.00 per contestant. Twenty-one contestants were fielded - 21 from PBDS and 20 from PERMAS. But whether the candidates received the full amount for their political campaign is not known.

On Sunday, 15 March 1987 the *Sunday Mail* carried a story on the move that sparked the rebellion. I wrote the article (See Appendix). The story "dropped a bomb-shell" in upper circles in Kuala Lumpur because it was blunt and to the point. It was stated that the Sarawak political crisis was triggered off by the move to screen timber licences in the State, a great portion of which belonged to certain politicians and their group. The report stated that about 30 timber licences linked to an ex-politician (worth millions - later the figure was officially given as 25 licences) had been revoked. This had hurt the pockets of the "old guard" who had already felt the effects of the recession. Quoting reliable sources, my article said that those affected were politicians who had abused their rights by selling or transferring their own licences without the approval of the authorities. The main reason for this action was because the same money generated from the timber industry had been used to finance the move to topple Taib. Because of this action, the

group was forced to act fast and move a vote of no-confidence against Taib. The groups appeared very perturbed by the report.

It was hoped that Taib would step-down "without a fight". Instead, their move had the reverse effect. It prompted Taib to make a bold move to return to the *rakyat* for their mandate. If political pundits thought that this speculation was plain "guess-work" of the writer then the *New Straits Times* was later to prove my report right when it's front-page headline story on 10 April read: "Timber freeze sparks 'war'." The story quoted in a local pro-Taib newspaper, *The People's Mirror*, even revealing details such as that the total size of the concessions which was three million acres (1.25 million hectares) and were concentrated "in the hands of a few". It revealed that 25 timber licences which were frozen were worth \$22.5 billion. The cat had been let out of the bag.

The People's Mirror carried a front-page story which spoke of an impending cabinet reshuffle. Those in the PBDS and SNAP who had shirked their duties began to sense that Taib meant business. Datuk Tajem must have realized that he would be replaced by a SNAP member – because he had held the position for far too long and SNAP did not have their chance. Possibly Datuk Edward Jeli was to have been promoted. It would have been a shock if Datuk Tajem was asked to step down. Other young PBDS members including Gramong Juna, once a Taib-loyalist, was to have been promoted to full ministerial status. The story could have triggered off a mild panic. The opposition group which had been working to-

wards a no-confidence motion after the UMNO general assembly decided they could not wait any longer. They had to convince Datuk Jeli that he would only be a "puppet" Deputy Chief Minister with a lot of responsibilities. There were other factors which made him change his mind. He decided to go for broke with the opposition faction. There was no looking back.



Datuk Jeli (hand raised) leads "SNAP" rebels home to
Kuching

CONFUSION IN REBEL CAMP

But while it appeared that the no-confidence motion was "sparked-off" by the two news reports, there is another version to the "inside story" of the move to topple Taib. Sources close to PBDS said that a few disgruntled politicians in SNAP and PBDS had approached Tun Rahman for help to remove Taib soon after the Parliamentary Election last August. They could not agree with Taib's style and attitude towards them. They were on a different wavelength. Taib wanted politicians motivated towards bringing development for the *rakyat*. But they had other plans on what to use their power for. Some say they were motivated by the timber concessions and other perks which normally go along with the power groups.

Sometime in December 1986, about three months before the move to topple Taib, two PBDS politicians spent their holidays overseas. It is understood that they met a former PBB leader in London "very informally". Sources said that they spoke about the "squeezing" of one concession which one of them shared with a member of the pro-Rahman faction. They also touched on Sarawak politics. At that point of time, efforts to register a new political party, the United Sarawak Natives' Association (USNA) in

mid-1986, had failed. Now they were trying to form another political party. Only a few knew when it would be formed. The Persatuan Rakyat Malaysia Sarawak (PERMAS) was formed on 19 March 1987 just after Taib had dissolved the State Legislative Assembly. Apparently the party leaders did have some political pull. It could not be coincidental. Was Tun Rahman involved in its formation?

While Datuk Moggie and Datuk Tajem were holidaying in the United Kingdom, another former SNAP leader suddenly turned up in Kuching. It was quite a surprise to see the veteran politician in town. Soon he was in political circulation among Dayak circles. Some people said that he was on a mission "under special instructions". He was frequently seen at the Sarawak Club, a "waterhole" of SNAP politicians. It looked like an all effort was being made to oust the Chief Minister.

Political observers believe that the real process to topple Taib took place that December 1986 when Taib was vacationing abroad with his family and seeking medical treatment for a sinus problem. It was now a matter of executing the plan and choosing the timing. Sources say that those who directly knew of the plan by early January included three "rebel" leaders from PBDS, three leaders from SNAP and six from PBB who later left to join the rebels. The rest generally got the idea but lacked details of how or when the *coup de grace* would be delivered.

Soon after the return of the two PBDS leaders, it was decided that the party triennial delegates'

conference (TDC) would be put forward to February instead of June. This was probably in anticipation that the State Elections would be in the later part of 1987. The early conference was to be an early "warm-up" for the election. It would also be "testing ground" for "Dayakism". The response to this ideology was overwhelming. The time was ripe for action.

In the initial days of the elections, all sorts of stories were churned out by the various newspapers and their propaganda machine. The favourite line used by the opposition group was that the Bersatu group had the backing of certain Federal leaders. The Barisan group claimed otherwise. The rebel claim was to add to the confidence of the "shaky" rebel assemblymen who were still quite confused as to what was really happening. The question which was churning in their minds was "why was the Deputy Prime Minister Encik Ghafar Baba made to appear that he was involved?"

At the same time, Tun Rahman Ya'kub boldly announced on Sunday, 15 March in Kuching that he was returning to politics to contest in the election because of the request of the *rakyat*, giving the impression that the people of Sarawak wanted him to return to govern the State. He said that he would be the "co-ordinator" of the group. But the most dramatic announcement he made at the press conference was that the Deputy Prime Minister, Encik Ghafar, knew about the intention of the group.

The following day, the *Sarawak Tribune* published his interview stating that the move to oust

Datuk Taib was prompted by Encik Ghafar. Encik Ghafar countered by saying that the report was "mischievous". He said he knew nothing about the matter and was in no way connected. This prompted Tun Rahman and the newspaper to make a public apology. The *Sarawak Tribune* also apologized.

At the same time the *New Straits Times* hinted that the plot to topple Datuk Taib was to have been carried out "quietly" with "someone (from Kuala Lumpur) flying to Kuching to persuade the Chief Minister to step down." The paper added that the plot was exposed prematurely when a news report in the local *Sarawak Tribune* (and *The Malay Mail* in Kuala Lumpur) on the same day, 10 March, stated that four Ministers and three assistant Ministers had resigned from the Sarawak cabinet. The story caused "someone to shy away from flying to Kuching".

Apparently someone had deliberately "fed" several stories to the press to create the impression that there was Federal support for the rebel group. Later several apologies were carried. But the credibility of the rebel group was now in question. Their integrity was at stake. Was there any room for decency?

The Star's V.K. Chin came up with a special comment on the Sarawak political crisis on 17 March 1987. He commended the Chief Minister for going back to the people for a mandate. Chin stated:

But Datuk Taib needs to establish his political and leadership credentials in the State or else he would not have the credibility and

stature to lead the administration. Too much time has been wasted in shadow boxing and the people will only suffer if this issue is not settled quickly and decisively.

He also advised the losers to accept the verdict of the people. He stated:

The losers may find the peoples' verdict hard to accept, but the victors should at least be allowed to govern the State without any further interference or distraction.

This was a statement of fact. But would Taib's detractors abide by the rules?

On 19 March, nine days after the eruption of the Sarawak crisis, Elections' Commission Chairman, Tan Sri Abdul Kadir Talib, announced that the nomination day of the Sarawak State Election would fall on 6 April. Polling would be held on 15 and 16 April, making it the shortest campaigning period for any State Election. The move would be a disadvantage to the Maju group. Taib had, once again, moved too fast for his opponents. All earlier speculation by the media were off target. There was no more time for dilly-dallying. The time had come to prove whether Taib's administration enjoyed the confidence of the *rakyat* or not. After all, the rebel faction had 27 people (one left the group to rejoin Taib's group when he discovered that he had been hoodwinked with a pack of lies) and if they had the support of the *rakyat* then they could not lose. At worst, the group expected to win two more seats and safely govern Sarawak with 30 seats – a figure which Tun Rahman Ya'kub predicted later for the "Bersatu group".

It is interesting to note that V.K. Chin, in another of his columns on 26 March, said that Tun Rahman Ya'kub was determined to "elbow his nephew aside". He added,

After having served as the State's Governor, Tun Rahman wants his old job back. It was only in 1981 that he handed the Chief Minister's post to his nephew to take on the ceremonial position of Head of State. Datuk Taib is hoping that after 16 April, he will be able to break free from his uncle's shadow. It will be a do-or-die attempt to establish himself as leader in his own right.

Chapter 7

TAIB CHALLENGES RAHMAN YA'KUB

The run up to nomination day was equally interesting. One of the headlines in *The People's Mirror* on 21 March 1987 read: "Fight me in Sebandi if you dare to, Rahman" challenge from Taib. Others were headlined: "Rebels using Dayakism as tool" warning to the *rakyat* and "Don't fall for promises" of the opposition revelation. But the opposition paper, *Sarawak Tribune*, had their own ideas as to how they should tell "their version of the story". There were stories on mass exodus of SNAP and PBB members announcing that hundreds, if not thousands, were flocking to the newly-formed group. Midway, the Bersatu group decided to change their name to that of "Kumpulan Maju" (Maju group). Initially it had adopted the name of the opposition party Bersatu (which fielded one candidate Abang Ariffin Abang Sebli in the Satok constituency – he secured only 84 votes).

By then the group had registered PERMAS whose slogan was "Maju". To counter the party's "Maju" (march forward) slogan, Datuk decided that the remaining three coalition parties within the Sarawak Barisan Nasional will have their own. If he had formulated the "Barisan Plus" system to accommodate PBDS in 1983 his new formula to cope with the "walk-out" of

PBDS from the State coalition was called "Barisan Tiga".

Sarawak has come out with a new 'Barisan Tiga' formula to unite the three state Barisan Nasional component parties in the coming elections.

The Minister for Agriculture and Community Development, Abang Johari bin Tun Abang Haji Openg, said the team comprising Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) and Sarawak National Party (SNAP) would be a formidable one.

With Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) joining the rebel Assemblymen who tried to topple the Government of Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, the old 'Barisan Plus' concept of including PBDS in the power-sharing game is now outdated.

However, the 'Barisan Tiga' team will only look for 'fair and honest' leaders as opposed to championing the cause of the 'rich and powerful'.

New Straits Times (23 March 1987)

This "united front" of three component parties - PBB, SUPP and SNAP - would work as one family to take on the new political challengers "Kumpulan Maju". While PBDS had "opted out" of the State coalition on their own accord, there was still some indecision on their part. They wanted to stay in the Barisan Nasional at Federal level at the same time. PBDS's fate in the "Barisan Nasional" was now hinged on the Federal Barisan Supreme

Council meeting on 1 April.

PERMAS was riding the crest of PBDS's Dayakism; they hoped for the "worst" so that the Dayak-based party could be "kicked out" of the Barisan Nasional and made a 'martyr'. That would have certainly been to the advantage of the opposition Maju group because the "expulsion" move would have gained PBDS much sympathy. But instead the Supreme Council did the reverse. They retained PBDS in the Sarawak State coalition and allowed them to contest using the Barisan Nasional's *dacing* symbol. The only snag was that they could only contest the six seats which they won immediately after the December 1983 State general election. PBDS proved their point, that the Barisan could not ignore this "Dayak" group. If PBDS accepted the Supreme Council's only six seats using the *dacing* symbol, they could not hope to form the next government with "new found" partners, PERMAS.

Several meetings were held in Kuching and there were generally two trends of thought within the Dayak party. Apparently PBDS President, Datuk Leo Moggie, was in favour of heeding the advice of the BN Supreme Council. But the Datuk Tajem faction was against it. At one meeting in the afternoon of 2 April, at the PBDS headquarters at Tabuan Jaya, there was disagreement which almost led to a split. According to certain PBDS insiders it reached a stage where the Tajem faction told Datuk Moggie that if he wanted to use the *dacing* symbol then he should leave the party. It put Datuk Moggie in a dilemma because he initially said he wanted to step down as Federal

Minister and contest the State Election – only if he was allowed to use the *dacing* symbol. But now it was a different story. Now he could not be Chief Minister of Sarawak. Datuk Moggie then acceded to the request of the Datuk Tajem faction "in the name of party unity" and they decided to forsake the BN Supreme Council decision and contest the election using their party symbol. He had lost out to the "new leader" Datuk Tajem – who according to Barisan sources had announced at a longhouse: "I'll be installed Chief Minister of Sarawak on Good Friday, 17 April 1987."

Tension was mounting within the opposition group. On 26 March, the founder member and senior PBDS Vice-President, Joseph Mamat Samuel, announced his resignation from the party and "exposed all". This was a terrible loss at crucial time. The PBDS had yet to announce their stand on what symbol they would use though there was speculation that they would ignore the Supreme Council decision.

On "April Fool's Day", an "expose" on the well-known Swiss fugitive, Bruno Manser, alleged that the Chief Minister and Tun Rahman were involved in a clandestine manufacturing operation in the northern jungle of Sarawak. While it was meant as a joke, it caused some blushes. There was suggestion that Tun Rahman Ya'kub was personally involved in the operation at quality control level and this created furore in the opposition camp. A published picture showed a look-alike of Tun Rahman at the so-called manufacturing centre. Some felt it was not funny. Neither was the Barisan group happy

with the joke. The pressure was on.

The following day at Bintulu, Tun Rahman displayed a fit of temper when he tore down two loud-speakers belonging to the PBB office which had been disrupting his speech. He threw them down from the second floor of the PBB office onto the road. Tun Rahman also tried to tear down the State Barisan Nasional's three component party flags with his umbrella. Police reports were lodged by both sides. Tun Rahman claimed that the volume of the loud-speakers should not have been increased. But the PBB officials replied that Tun Rahman should not have deliberately held the meeting at the shop directly opposite the PBB office. Tun Rahman said he reacted to prevent any untoward incident as his supporters were agitated. But, others said it was an unnecessary emotional reaction and there was public criticism of Tun Rahman's action. The *rakyat* generally felt that the display of temper was so unlike the former Head of State.

THE FIRE OF DAYAKISM

Friday, 4 April 1987 was an exciting day for it was the Lubok Antu parliamentary by-election and PBDS candidate Jawah Gerang was contesting against former PBDS branch secretary Augustine Sating Jemut. The by-election was held following the tragic death of MP for Lubok Antu in January during the Chinese New Year holidays. The by-election date had been fixed much earlier and it was just coincidental that it was being held during this critical period. But the Maju group felt the election could work in their favour. Political pundits predicted that how the predominantly Dayak constituents would vote would indicate if there was truly support for the "Dayakism" wave.

Jawah won the election in a straight fight, beating the older "veteran" Augustine Sating by a 2,941 majority. PBDS was at its height of confidence. The fire of Dayakism they had ignited had begun to spread. At the same time, several writers, particularly from Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore suddenly began to enter Sarawak. One writer, Syed Hussein Alwee or Syed Hussein Alatas, was denied entry. He claimed that he had asked permission from the immigration officer to telephone the Chief Minister and the Yang Dipertua Negeri but was refused the request. But at least one other "pro-Maju" writer from Singapore, managed to slip in unnoticed. It is said his

objective was to write on the historical comeback of Tun Abdul Rahman Ya'kub! Looking back, I asked myself: "Was this what Tun Rahman meant when he said that he was "updating" his book.

While the opposition was so confident of an overwhelming victory, Taib Mahmud went on his usual business of convincing the *rakyat* that they must vote for multi-racial politics and not the politics of one group. It was his job to explain in the simplest way what his administration represented and what the Maju group represented. He had the television, radio and the media on his side, but it was still an awesome task taking on a "giant" in the stature of Tun Rahman Ya'kub, who was not only Chief Minister for 11 years and Head of State for four years, but had a reputation of being the most powerful politician in Sarawak's history.

Even if Taib had been drumming in the message constantly through political speeches, the people already knew. All Taib needed to do was to tell the truth, even if it would hurt his own uncle badly. But before he could throw the first punch, the opposition announced a list of "nominees" who own timber concessions in their Bahasa Malaysia propaganda vehicle *Utusan Sarawak*. They named 19 nominees, among them several notable Taib supporters, Deputy Defence Minister Datuk Abang Abu Bakar, SNAP President Datuk Amar James Wong, PBB Secretary-General Datuk Leonard Linggi Jugah and "giant-killer" Encik Wahab Dollah. That was all Taib needed. Taib supporters lashed back and released

only a "small fraction" of companies owned by Tun Rahman's group.

Among the Tun Rahman group who owned or had a share in concessions were all eight of Tun Rahman's daughters, six "rebel" assemblymen loyal to him, Datuk Tajem, Datuk Salleh Jafaruddin, Haji Zainuddin Satem, Haji Wan Habib Syed Mahmud, former State Secretary Datuk Abang Yusof Puteh and Wan Madzhi Wan Mahdzar. The list was printed in the pro-Taib Bahasa Malaysia paper *Cermin Rakyat* and *The People's Mirror*. But the confidence generated by the Maju camp through their propaganda was so convincing and overwhelming that the PBB Vice-President and Deputy Education Minister Haji Bujang Ulis, decided to switch sides at the eleventh hour. In a sudden move on the 12 April, Haji Bujang openly declared his support for Tun Rahman and the Maju group. Earlier Haji Bujang had said that he was not involved in the move to topple Datuk Taib and attended the "rebel" meeting in Kuala Lumpur on 19 March as an observer. But all so suddenly he was singing a different tune now. Some say that he had panicked thinking the opposition was going to win.

With three more days to polling, all the competitors remained cool. Large bets were being taken, some for the Barisan Nasional and some against. Some on Tun Rahman's position, some on the UMNO elections – also just around the corner. The PERMAS bets were on the Prime Minister losing. With Haji Bujang joining their team, their leaders felt they could not go wrong this time. However Taib had different ideas. He

immediately demanded that Haji Bujang should step down from his ministerial post and face a parliamentary by-election. The Chief Minister also expressed his disappointment that Tun Rahman had forsaken the very principles he believed in by challenging the Barisan Nasional particularly the PBB which was responsible for building him up.

At about the same time it was reported that several prominent Sabah politicians from USNO and Berjaya were campaigning for the Maju group. They included the former Berjaya Information Chief Datuk Majid Khan, USNO Vice-President Datuk Yahaya Lampong (a close friend of Datuk Salleh Jafaruddin), former Sabah Finance Minister Datuk Dzulkifli Abdul Hamid was however turned back at the Kuching International Airport. All this fuelled the rumour that an USNO leader had promised financial support to the opposition group.

At the height of Kumpulan Maju's confidence, their supporters were seen patronizing leading hotels and other spots frequented by Kuching socialites. Many were confident of winning. Some were prompted to say things that they would regret. One pro-Taib businessman from Kuala Lumpur who had been working in Sarawak for several years was even told, "Start packing your bags. You are going home after the elections."

TAIB WINS: A GENTLEMAN'S GLORY

Prime Minister, Datuk Patinggi Dr. Mahathir Mohamad's "flying" visit to Sarawak on 14 April was considered the usual election tour. At Matu Daro, where Tun Rahman was contesting, he urged the people of Sarawak to ensure a victory for the Barisan Nasional. However the *Sarawak Tribune* reported otherwise, stating in the front page headlines that Dr. Mahathir had "lectured" Taib. Someone was trying to give the public a different picture.

The weatherman reported a fine day for polling on 15 and 16 April. However there would be convectional rain in some of the rural constituencies. True enough, it did rain cats and dogs in some places. I was caught in one thunderstorm in the Padawan area of the Bengoh constituency on the first day. But unlike some of the previous elections, the people did not stay at home but came out to cast their vote. After all it was an important decision and only the *rakyat* could judge who should rule Sarawak. But it was the end of the affair. All sorts of propaganda was circulated including an eleventh hour-forged letter with a "fake" signature belonging to Datuk Dr. Sulaiman Daud, the Sarawak Federal Minister of Land and Regional Development.

The letter, dated 15 April 1987, criticized Taib.

The following day, Datuk Sulaiman made an official denial (see *The People's Mirror* 16 April 1987). The following day, at about 9.30 a.m. on 16 April, the final day of the polling, there was a small explosion near Chung Hua Primary school in Jalan Padungan. The police believed it was caused by a home-made "time-bomb". Others said it was a large home-made fire cracker. Investigations later revealed that those involved had underground connections in a neighbouring country following a second explosion which ripped off a portion of a Chinese temple in Jalan Tabuan on 1 May. The police have confirmed that the explosion was caused by home-made electronic time bombs. At least six people have been picked up - four in the early hours of 13 May 1987.

All this reminded me of the same tactics used at the Oya by-election where another "forged" letter alleged that Taib and the Prime Minister had drawn up a plan to convert a certain race after the by-election. The letter was purportedly signed by Wan Madzihi. I remember an incident at the Sarawak Club where an assemblyman told me that riots could occur at Oya. Could Oya be a Tambunan of Sarawak? His words were: "There will be another 13 May...there will be bloodshed." I remember that incident clearly.

The public was not aware of the "explosion" in Jalan Padungan when they came out to vote in Kuching on 16 April. Taib Mahmud, his mother Hajjah Wan Hamidah Haji Ya'kub and his wife, Hajjah Laila Abu Bakar arrived at their voting station in Sekolah Rendah Merpati Jepang at 9.30 a.m. He was smiling all the way, looking bright

and brilliant as ever. On hand to meet him was Datuk Dr. Sulaiman Daud, the PBB Vice-President who had proven his loyalty to the party and the Barisan Nasional though there were attempts to implicate him as "anti-Taib".

That evening, the streets of Kuching were deserted. Many had stayed at home to listen to the results which would be telecast by RTM. All sorts of speculations were made. Pro-DAP supporters felt that they could win at least five seats from the SUPP. Pro-Taib supporters felt that "Barisan Tiga" would definitely win – but by how many seats, no one dared to predict. Some of the pressmen were stationed in the Maju camp at the Aurora Hotel while others were kept waiting outside the gate of Rumah Sarawak – the former residence of the Chief Minister which had been converted into the Barisan Nasional's control centre. As the results began to trickle in, it appeared that the Maju group had the edge. PBDS Mikai Mandau's 741-majority win over SNAP's Nicholas Bawin announced over RTM at about 10.30 p.m. had a demoralising effect. The excitement and anxiety was becoming overbearing. Even after midnight, it was still "neck-to-neck". Things didn't look too good for the Barisan Nasional. According to the *Singapore Straits Times* (in an 18 April article), Tun Rahman was so confident of victory that he prepared an advanced "press statement" and signed it as "Chief Minister designate". But all of a sudden, the picture began to change as more and more results of Barisan Nasional victories began to trickle in. The main gate to Rumah Sarawak was

packed with journalists, both local and foreign. It was evident that Taib Mahmud had emerged the victor. But there was a veil of secrecy as winning assemblymen, political figures, local dignitaries and top civil servants began trooping in. The press was barred entry for the moment. But at about 1.45 a.m. the gate was opened to the media.

Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud was to be sworn in as Chief Minister for a third term. He would be Chief Minister for another five years. Immediately after, Datuk Taib called on the Opposition to respect the *rakyat* and let the Sarawak Barisan rule in peace.

Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Abdul Taib Mahmud today urged all parties in Sarawak to stop running down the Government and instead help to administer and develop the State. The Elections were over and "the accusations and counter-accusations hurled against each other should cease," said Datuk Taib who was sworn in this morning as Chief Minister for a third term.

Datuk Taib, whose Parti Pesaka Bumiputra Bersatu (PBB) and its partners, Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) and Sarawak National Party (SNAP), suffered badly in the contest for the Dayak votes in the rural areas said:

'As Chief Minister, I will continue to ensure that the interests of all communities in the State are safe-guarded,' he told the Press after his swearing-in.

New Straits Times (18 April 1987)

Taib had won his great battle – one which proved that democracy was still part of the Sarawak system. He proved that, despite facing a powerful and all-consuming group, the forces of good were still on his side. And on the way to this tremendous victory over those who had tried to topple him, Taib in turn toppled all the leading rebels involved in the unconstitutional 10 March move.

Heading the list of fallen rebel leaders was Maju group co-ordinator and PERMAS president Tun Rahman who was defeated by political novice "giant-killer" Wahab Dollah in Matu Daro. Next to fall was the "top General" of Tun Rahman, Datuk Tajem in Lingga. He was beaten by another "new but experienced face" Donald Lawan. Maju group's initial "Chief Minister designate" Datuk Haji Noor lost to "born-again Christian" leader Ramsay Jitam in Lundu. One of Taib's more vocal critics, former PBB Vice-President Datuk Wan Yusof Tun Tuanku Bujang followed suit when he lost to the Chief Minister in Sebandi. Another former Minister in the Taib cabinet, Datuk Hajjah Hafsa, lost to Barisan Nasional's Sharifah Mordiah Tuanku Haji Fauzi in Petra Jaya. Haji Wan Habib, a cousin of Taib was also defeated at Balin-gian.

Other Tun Rahman loyalists who fell to the Barisan Nasional were former PBB leaders, Wilfred Nissom (Tasik Biru), Haji Zainuddin Satem (Saribas) and Tun Rahman's son-in-law, Saadi Olia (Kuala Rajang). All three were incumbents. Taib Mahmud's group had knocked out seven former PBB members incumbents (exclud-

ing Tun Rahman and Datuk Tajem) in one go. However Taib also had his losses – two PBB incumbents – who fell to the Maju group. They were Usop Sani Wahab who went down to Datuk Salleh Jafaruddin in Subis and Ambrose Blikau who lost to PBDS candidate Felix Banting in Katibas. The greatest success of this "counter-coup" was that the Opposition had lost all their leaders.

Taib had been gracious in his victory. Despite what the rebels had done or said against him he is willing to forgive and forget. But only if they admit their mistakes. There is room for compromise – but certainly not for those who believed in treachery. Taib said he wants sincere politicians – those who care for the State and are determined to help him contribute towards building a united Sarawak. The time is now. Taib had proven that there is room for gentlemen politicians in the State. It took him 38 days to prove this.



Taib and his mother casting their vote on 16 April 1987



Datuk Taib sworn in as Chief Minister for a third term



Taib meets the press at about 2.30 pm on 17 April 1987
after being sworn in as Chief Minister



Victory for a Gentleman Politician

APPENDICES

Excerpts of an unpublished interview by author with Tun Rahman Ya'kub on 23 January 1987 at his residence, Sri Bahagia, in Petra Jaya.

James: When you stepped down as governor of Sarawak, you said that you would like to devote more time with your family, particularly your grandchildren. Have you been able to do this?

Tun Rahman: Largely I have been spending very much of my time with my family and particularly when I am in London. As usual, people come with all sorts of problems. The time that I used to spend in my official capacity relies on the thinking of the family as well as for uplifting myself on religious knowledge. And I have been involved quite a bit in Islamic activities.

James: You have been away from Sarawak over long spells. We understand that you are writing a book about your life story. Is this what is taking most of your time?

Tun Rahman: I have completed that a long time ago. I am just updating everything now. And when the events crop up, I just write a bit more. I have been writing for sometime.

James: After years of politics, it must be difficult to push it aside and concentrate on retirement. Quarters loyal to you have constantly tried to lure

you back to the political arena and the newspapers can only work on speculations. Why have you not put a stop to these rumours or is there any truth in the speculations?

Tun Rahman: Nobody can put a stop to the rumours. Even if you say no, people will say yes. Some people who choose not to believe will multiply the rumours. As simple as that. No, I don't think it is difficult because I don't regard politics, as some people do, as my life, as my blood. It is just part and parcel of one's own wish. And in a way politics was thrown on my lap when Tunku proposed to me. I was asked to go into politics. Organize the Alliance. And then Tunku asked me to go to Kuala Lumpur. But you see politics is not my only vocation. It's not that all important if one looks at politics in the ordinary sense of the word that you must contest, must hold position, blah, blah, in the narrow sense.

But in the wider sense, knowing something about one's country, expressing views about one's country, one will continue to be interested. And I have always maintained that as a Muslim I can't divorce politics from my religious faith. That is my basic belief. That is why when there were talks and all sorts of allegations that I am anti this, anti that, a Muslim cannot be anti anything.

James: Is the so-called quarrel between you and Datuk Taib a real problem? If it is a personal problem what steps are taken to patch it up?

Tun Rahman: I can't answer the question because

there is a court case coming. It's *sub judice*. I have explained it umpteen times.

James: Are you involved in any business overseas or plan to start investing in the world market?

Tun Rahman: How? I am of this age. Education, religion and the truth is close to my heart.

James: How do you view the accumulation of wealth through the abuse of power?

Tun Rahman: I am sure everybody agrees with the principle that it's not simply the accumulation of wealth. Anything, when there is abuse of power is wrong. It is not just a question of accumulation of wealth. In Islam, there is nothing wrong if someone or any person struggles hard in a legal way to make themselves rich. Provided that he does not become a slave of money. For example, the first caliph was quite rich. So was the third caliph. And they were able to use their wealth for the benefit of the community.

The trouble with the world today is too much following the secular egalitarian principle. So the world become slaves of materials and the human becomes prisoners of the world rather than vice versa.

James: The Sarawak Barisan Nasional is a four-party coalition. In your opinion, is there room for another political party in Sarawak and if so will the party be more effective in the government or opposition?

Tun Rahman: It's a practical question which cannot be theorized. And the constitution of Malay-

sia guarantees freedom of association subject to certain limitations with regard to security cases. And we cannot stop people from organizing themselves in a body, either as a political party or any association. Whether it will be good for the country or not is not a theoretical question. It needs to be answered when we cross the bridge. It has to be judged by results. And an opinion in this respect expressed *invacuo* for example without factual foundation, is merely a theoretical thing.

James: There is talk that you are interested in contesting in the coming election. Sources have linked you with a new party called PERMAS. A former SNAP Iban leader who returned from overseas recently is said to be linked with the party. Was your presence at the Oya by-election indicative of your impending come-back to politics?

Tun Rahman: I will answer that question when I have to cross the bridge. And as I said earlier, people can speculate. People can spread rumours, people can fan fire just to justify themselves. Some people look at politics as essentially a dirty game. I don't share that sort of view. In order to gain power, some people will resort to and live on smearing others. I don't share that sort of politics. I feel if one wants to offer one's self to the masses, one should not dwell on the misdeeds of others. One should really go to the people based on one's own credit. I don't gain very much from all the various "diatribes" that take place with one group and another either between UMNO and

PAS. Like now, PBDS, SUPP and SNAP over the taking of Independents into PBDS. And I think we are following too much alien form of politics which is not suitable to our Asian mentality.

James: Do you think the rumour about your return to politics is fair?

Tun Rahman: I can only answer that there have been many unfair things said about me by individuals and the newspapers. Before I came back to Sarawak, I was branded anti-Chinese and ultra-Malay. That was the label they put on me. Some of the SUPP leaders like to do that in the past. But then, my association with them was well over eleven years. They were able to sleep in the same bed with me. And then after that since this so-called trouble, they began to sing a different tune and put all the blame on me. This sort of practice in democracy, when one previous leader goes down, then you put all the blame on him when you are part and parcel of the whole thing; part of the machinery. Why did you tolerate that fellow if he was so bad for eleven years? What I see is this, some of them entertain the idea, tendency to wipe out everything I did in Sarawak. I leave it to them. I was asked to come back here by the late Tun Abdul Razak to lead the government in order to clean out Sarawak from the communist menace. And in fact I was requested by my colleagues to go back to Kuala Lumpur in 1976, because the security situation was almost back to normal.

My answer is quite simple. Wherever my service is needed, I will go. This is what I told Tun

Hussein when he was the Prime Minister in 1978. There was a problem, with SUPP. He called me up and said, "You want to come back here? I want you to come here to be my Minister for Defence." I said: "Datuk, if my service is needed, wherever you want me to go, I will go for the sake of the country. But if it is because of SUPP, I don't have to come to Kuala Lumpur." I told Tun Hussein that I can step down but make sure whom they want. In the end (Tan Sri Ong) Kee Hui and (Datuk Leo) Moggie said we don't want to change forces mid-stream. And then I stayed on. My attitude is that one should not feel that "Oh, this is what I want. I must have it." This is the teaching I learnt from Tunku, Tun Razak and Tun Ismail.

James: How is your present health?

Tun Rahman: I had an operation. But someone said in the newspapers that I was failing in health. I won't mention names. I had a heart operation in 1980 and I had a few more attacks after that. I went to London a couple of times even as Chief Minister for check-ups. After my operation, I said to myself, "How can I continue as Chief Minister?" It is not fair to the country and I cannot give full attention to the affairs of the State. And so when asked by Tengku Razaleigh, Dr. Mahathir, Ghafar Baba and all my friends, I said, "Sorrylah!"

You know immediately after the operation I became very forgetful. And that was the experience of Tun Hussein Onn also. That's why he stepped down. So how could I continue to work? Just to

force yourself to live in palaces and you want wide surroundings. I don't share this sort of thing."

James: What are your views on governing with a firm hand as opposed to an open style of politics?

Tun Rahman: The degree of firmness must be understood and the circumstances prevailing at the particular time. If there is war, you can't have an open style of government. Firmness in Islam is tempered with mercy.

James: Do you think at times that it is good to be cruel to be kind?

Tun Rahman: No, I won't use that expression. Cruelty is abhorrent. But firmness, yes.

James: I suspect that you actually like Datuk Taib.

Tun Rahman: You know, he is more a son to me than nephew from the day he was born. But liking for a person must not blind you to any shortcomings, to the misdoings. It is my duty as a father to say this is wrong, that is wrong. If I am your good friend, I must tell you where you go wrong. Otherwise, I am not your good friend for I am leading you astray. So if a person is more like a father, then an uncle can be regarded as an enemy. Make your judgement there.

James: Do you think racial politics can work in Sarawak?

Tun Rahman: This has always been my theme since 1970 when I came here. If we try to impose our will on any particular community, of course they will resent. I don't think that we ought to be

more than God. Accept a Chinese as a Chinese, accept an Indian as an Indian, Malays as Malays. Strike a balance between the demands of these people. But they must realize that the government has limitations. Sometimes you expect another race to sacrifice but you don't want to sacrifice. That is not fair.

Respect the People's Verdict

Comment by V.K.Chin (*The Star* 17 March 1987)

Datuk Patinggi Abdul Taib Mahmud , the man in the eye of the political storm in Sarawak, never had it easy since he took over as the State's Chief Minister in 1981. From the present crisis, it is quite evident that after some six years, he has yet to settle down to the job.

This is certainly not for want of trying. Though he was given the task of running the State Government, he found that the cards were stacked against him and his predecessor was too well-entrenched in Sarawak.

His first problem was that he succeeded a politician who was reluctant to give up power. The fact that the person is Tun Rahman Ya'kub, who is Datuk Patinggi Taib's uncle, was certainly no help and tended to complicate matters.

No doubt the last thing the new Chief Minister expected was problems with his own uncle who was also his political mentor at one time. But when he found that his path was blocked with every step he took, he could be forgiven for being frustrated.

A lawyer by training, Datuk Patinggi Taib spent many years, first as Deputy Minister and later as a full Cabinet member, in Kuala Lumpur. He also had a stint as a member of the Sarawak Cabinet before he went into Federal politics.

Unfortunately, he was away from the State for too long while Tun Rahman was able to use his authority and influence to strengthen his grip on the political and government machinery in Sarawak. The ten years he spent as Chief Minister was sufficient for Tun Rahman to have almost the whole State in his pocket. No decision of consequence could be approved without his okay.

This was the stifling atmosphere which Datuk Patinggi Taib found himself in when he moved to Kuching. He had expected to have at least a smooth take-over with Tun Rahman, who was elevated to Governor, to provide the necessary advice and backup.

But this was not to be. To Datuk Patinggi Taib, his uncle was the problem though Tun Rahman, as Governor, should be above politics. However, there were others who believed that it was partly the new Chief Minister's own fault as his style of administration was unacceptable to others who had been around the State Secretariat longer.

Some of these State leaders felt that it was unfair for him to put the blame on Tun Rahman and should be accountable for some of the things which had gone wrong in the State.

On the other hand, it was also quite understandable that Tun Rahman wanted a piece of the political action, due to his long association with the State administration. Having been active in politics, both Federal and State, since the 1960s, it was not easy to just sit back in the Istana and perform all the ceremonies associated with the office of Head of State.

The present political uncertainty in Sarawak is due in part to Datuk Patinggi Taib's inability to build a strong base though he had many years to do it. For him to achieve this would only mean that he would have to clash openly with his uncle which is something a good nephew is not supposed to do.

But Datuk Patinggi Taib needs to establish his political and leadership credentials in the State or else he would not have the credibility and stature to lead the administration. Too much time has been wasted in shadow boxing and the people will only suffer if this issue is not settled quickly and decisively.

The best way of doing this is to go back to the people for a mandate. This is what Datuk Patinggi Taib has done in calling for an election. Whatever the outcome, it is hoped that the key players in this battle will respect the wishes of the voters.

The losers may find the people's verdict hard to accept but the victors should at least be allowed the opportunity to govern the State without further interference or distraction.

Sarawak Crisis: Move that sparked the rebellion

Comment by James Ritchie (*The Sunday Mail* 15 March 1987)

The Sarawak political crisis is believed to have been triggered off by the move to screen timber licences in the State – a great portion of which belongs to certain politicians and their supporters.

To date, about 30 timber licences of companies linked to an ex-politician have been revoked.

According to sources, the State Government's recent drive forced an "underground movement of politicians" linked to timber concessions to act fast to protect their interests.

Their first attempt to topple Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud failed when he discovered the plan and cut short an overseas' tour. He revealed the existence of the plot to a rousing crowd of 20,000 at the Kuching International Airport on 13 January 1985.

Since then, Datuk Taib has been constantly challenged by the "Gang of Four" who have used various methods to weaken the Chief Minister psychologically.

Recently, the State Government stepped up its drive against Datuk Taib's detractors and revoked the timber licences of two businessmen for transferring their concessions without informing the authorities.

Following that, the State Government announced that it would screen all timber licencees who "abused the timber industries". This included licencees who sold or transferred their licences or sold or transferred shares.

Last week's screening of timber licences made mandatory the obtaining of approval from the Government even for a change in partnership in a timber company or appointment or change of logging contractors, otherwise the licence would be rendered invalid.

According to Taib loyalists, this move hurt the pockets of the "Old Guards" who were feeling the effects of the recession.

The sources said the political group opposed to Datuk Taib's administration was desperate and had planned to gear up for the elections due by December 1988.

Last July's Oya by-election became a testing ground for the opposition group, which it expected to win easily and to trigger off the downfall of Datuk Taib. But they failed when Datuk Salleh Jafaruddin lost to Barisan Nasional candidate, Wan Madzihi Wan Mahdzar, in a straight fight.

All was going smoothly when a strain developed in the relationship between Datuk Taib and Wan Madzihi.

The latter, who was once Datuk Taib's "blue-eyed boy", lost favour and he teamed up with the rebel Bersatu group in Kuala Lumpur last Thursday.

The sources said the original strategy of the rival group was to strengthen their financial base by selling their assets and draw support of Parti

Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) to prove to the Federal Government that there was a legitimate reason for a motion of no confidence in Datuk Taib.

But by the time they got to carrying out their plans, the coffers of the Taib dissidents had dwindled to the point that "some were broke."

However, the sources said, the plan to launch an attack on Datuk Taib after the Umno elections had to be put into immediate effect because Taib loyalists were beginning to be suspicious of the regular trips made by certain Sarawak politicians to Kuala Lumpur.

Datuk Taib has alleged that the group was using money from timber concessions (given to them by the State Government) to fight his administration and he feels that the "freezing" of timber licences is legitimate.

He said the group had used smear tactics and propaganda, including the charge that he was *syirik* (godless) in an attempt to topple him, but failed.

Datuk Taib claimed that there was an "unseen hand of a rich man" involved in the mass resignation of Ministers, Assistant Ministers and State Assemblymen.

He said he was aware that several State Assemblymen were secretly summoned to Kuala Lumpur and given free air tickets and free accommodation in a major hotel there.

The group even employed "guards" so that authorities would not be in contact with those who had resigned.

It is understood that the group intended to

catch the Taib faction napping. To some extent they did, but Datuk Taib's men were not all asleep although they were not able to stop "some Yang Berhormats" from backing the rebels' meeting.

The sources said the group's holding of the meeting in Kuala Lumpur and on the first day of the March parliamentary session last Monday was "well-calculated timing."

However, they added, the group did not anticipate the Taib faction's quick action to call a snap election and appoint a new Cabinet.

Things are now moving very fast. As an immediate counter-action, it is understood that State agencies and businessmen loyal to Datuk Taib withdrew about \$150 million from a local bank connected to former politicians.

Other forms of economic "boycott" of the group, which is said to be running out of capital, is expected to take place to dampen the enthusiasm of the rebels.



ISTANA,
KUCHING, SARAWAK

HIS Excellency, the Yang di-Pertua Negeri Sarawak, Tun Datuk Patinggi Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, has recently returned to the State from overseas.

It has been brought to the attention of His Excellency that various statements have appeared in the Press to the effect that there is in being a scheme, to which it is alleged or implied that His Excellency is a party, to bring about his return to office as Chief Minister. His Excellency wishes it to be known that he has no knowledge of any such scheme.

His Excellency further wishes it to be known that he has no desire to return to the scene of party politics. His Excellency has served the Federation and the State for very many years in various ministerial offices, the last of which was that of Chief Minister of Sarawak, an office which he held for almost eleven years. His Excellency relinquished this office of his own will and upon doing so was appointed Yang di-Pertua Negeri Sarawak by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong. Upon completion of his duties as Yang di-Pertua Negeri, it is not the intention of His Excellency to return to the scene of party politics, or enter any contest for ministerial



ISTANA,
KUCHING, SARAWAK

2

office. It is and has always been the intention of His Excellency, upon completion of his duties, to return to private life and devote himself to the affairs of his family for which he has had little time over the last twenty years of public office.

It is a matter for regret that His Excellency's name has been brought into political debate. It is to be hoped that the issue of this statement will end this association of His Excellency's name with these matters.

His Excellency has taken the advice of Counsel upon the statements that have appeared in the Press and is advised that a number of these are defamatory. His Excellency reserves the right to take such action as may be appropriate to protect his name and establish the untruth of the statements made.

The list of pro-Taib supporters purported to be "millionaires" close to Datuk Taib.

| | NAMA SYARIKAT | TARIKH DI-KELUARKAN | LESEN-LESEN | NOMBOR KELUA-SAN |
|--|--|--|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. YB Datuk Abg Haji Abu Bakar YM Tunku Datin Maziah | Timplex (Sarawak) Sdn. Bhd | | | |
| 2. Datuk James Wong Kim Min | Sarawak Trading Co. Sdn. Bhd. | | T/0129 | 13,850 h |
| 3. Zainab Mahmud (adik Taib) | Sarawak Plywood (M) Sdn Bhd. | | T/0191 | 54,416 h |
| 4. Kenneth Kanyan Ak Temenggon Koh | a) Garu Sdn. Bhd. b) Balleh Sawmill Co. Bhd. c) Keresa Timber Corp. Sdn. Bhd. d) Raplex Sdn. Bhd. | 1.12.77 1.8.67 26.7.76 2.2.77 | T/0354 T/378 T/0537 T/560 | 165,000 a 62,669 s 49,996 h 72,251 h |
| 5. Datuk Leonard Linggi Juyah | a) Keresa Timber Corp. Sdn. Bhd. b) Raplex Sdn. Bhd. c) Rajang Wood Sdn. Bhd. | 28.7.76 22.77 15.8.79 | T/0537 T/560 T/3024 | 49,596 h 72,251 h 309,575 h |
| 6. Haji Rakawi Nur | Sejoru Sdn. Bhd. | | T/3140 | 31,000 h |
| 7. Haji Annuar Razak | First Court Sdn. Bhd. | | T/3148 | 46,000 h |
| 8. West M'sian – Lim Ger Goh Liew Lee Chuan | Mariwan Sdn. Bhd. | 1.8.86 | T/3167 | 32,062 h |
| 9. Datuk Ting Ming Hoi | Malkita Sdn. Bhd. | | | |
| 10. Ding Family | Timplex (S) Sdn. Bhd. Gayason Sdn. Bhd. | 1.8.86 1.8.86 | T/3166 T/3165 | 31,500 h 25,006 h |

| | | | | |
|---|--|---------|--|---|
| 11. Wahab Dollah | Maujaya Sdn. Bhd. Gaunaco Sdn. Bhd. Rinki Sdn. Bhd. Maxiwealth Sdn. Bhd. Pasin Sdn. Bhd. Mantan Sdn. Bhd. | | T/3144 T/3143 T/3141 T/3139 T/3136 T/3138 | 53,100 h 53,100 h 33,300 h 96,800 h 104,250 h 75,500 h |
| 12. Sharkawi Bohari | Maujaya Sdn. Bhd. Maxiwealth Sdn. Bhd. Rinki Sdn. Bhd. Mantan Sdn. Bhd. | 14.1.85 | T/3144 T/3139 T/3141 T/3138 | 53,100 h 96,800 h 33,300 h 75,500 h |
| 13. Abdul Hamed Sepawi | Malelands Co. Sdn. Bhd. Gayasar | | T/3149 T/3185 | 26,800 h 25,000 h |
| 14. Haji Khalid Abdullah & family | Malikite Sdn. Bhd. | 1.8.86 | T/3186 | 31,500 h |
| 15. Mohd. Onn Ariflin | Timplex (S) Sdn. Bhd. | | | |
| 16. Abdul Ajis Majeed | Kedasa Sdn. Bhd. | | T/3127 | 41,000 h |
| 17. Dr Abang Yusul Abg. Haji Abdul Razak | Palutan Sdn. Bhd. | | T/0291 | |
| 18. Abu Bakar bin Suut | | | | |
| 19. Ahmed bin Suut | | | | |

Source: Utusan Sarawak

TIMBER WEALTH OWNED BY TUN RAHMAN'S GROUP

KUCHING, Sat. — SARAWAK'S wealth, which is mainly derived from its forest reserves, was to have been enjoyed by all, but it is not so as a majority of this wealth is heaped on to the henchmen of the former Chief Minister and Yang Di-Pertua Negeri Tun Rahman Yakub according to statistics and documented evidence produced to *The People's Mirror* today.

Tun Rahman himself had openly admitted that very fact when he said that he had helped a number of people plagued with financial problems to become rich overnight.

Upon investigating documents made available it was revealed that at least half of the timber licences were owned by Tun Rahman's "group."

The list itself is not complete but sufficient enough to warrant a staggering \$200 million of Sarawakian wealth. .

The above complements Tun Rahman's success in harnessing rakyat's wealth ought to have been used for the development of the state, political observers said.

Tun Rahman, who is now aging and inflicted with bad health, had admitted that he was now absent-minded but all the same had decided in returning to active politics.

"The rakyat who are confused about Tun Rahman's struggle, should take a closer look at the timber licences owned by Tun Rahman's "gang" before drawing their conclusion and falling prey to falsehoods and trickery deployed by the opposition said the observer.

PART OF THE LIST IS AS FOLLOWS

Baltim Timber Sdn Bhd

Licence Number: T/3070

Location: Batang Belega, Belaga

Acreage: 48,763 hectares (120.444 acres)

Directors: (a) Haji Wan Habib Syed Mahmud (Permas candidate)
(b) Wan Madzihi Mahdzar (Permas candidate)

Syarikat Delapan Sdn Bhd

Licence Number: T/3071

Location Batang Kemenan, Tubak Bintulu

Acreage: 67,476 hectares (166,665 acres)

Directors: (a) Datin Debong Anyi (Datuk Tajang's wife)
(b) Norlia Abdul Rahman (Tun Rahman's daughter)
(c) Haji Zainuddin Satem (Permas candidate)

Lembah Mewah Sdn Bhd

Licence Number: T/3069

Location: Batang Kemenan, Tubau

Acreage: 94,126 hectares (232,491.22 acres)

Directors: Datin Debong Anyi
Khadijah Abdul Rahman (Tun Rahman's daughter)
Norlia Abdul Rahman (Tun Rahman's daughter)

Kehutanan Sentiasa Sdn Bhd

Licence Number: T/4152

Location: Sungai Jelalong

Acreage: 30,829 hectares (76,147.63 acres)

Directors: Haji Deli Abdul Rahman (Tun Rahman's henchman)
Datuk Haji Salleh Jafaruddin (Permas candidate)
Dr Wan Ali Tuanku Mahdi (Permas candidate)

Berbet Sdn Bhd

Licence Number: T/0281

Acreage: 35,554 hectares (87,818 acres)

Director: Norlia Abdul Rahman (Tun Rahman's daughter)

Maguari Sdn Bhd

Licence Number: T/0261

Location: Melana, Sungai Rumput

Acreage: 33,554 hectares (82,878 acres)

Director: Haji Mohd Deli Abdul Rahman

Keruntum Sdn Bhd

Licence Number: T/0279

Acreage: 198,926 hectares (466,647 acres)

Directors: Haji Mohd Deli Abdul Rahman

Haji Mohd Louis Ali

Kehutanan Sentiasa Sdn Bhd

Timber Licence: T/3007

Location: Sungai Jelalong

Acreage: 30,829 hectares (76,143.63 acres)

Directors: Haji Mohd Deli Abdul Rahman

Haji Salleh Jaffaruddin

Shobra Sdn Bhd

Licence Number: T/0282

Acreage: 1,163 hectares

Directors: Datuk Amar Abang Yusuf Puteh (Permas candidate)

Datin Amar Rogayah (Datuk Amar Abang Yusuf's wife)

Source: The People's Mirror 13 April 1987

THE LIST GOES ON FOR ALL TO JUDGE

LEMBAHAN MEWAH SDN. BHD.

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Licence No. | : | T/3069 |
| Total forested area | : | 92,228 ha |
| Date of issue | : | 26/5/81 |
| Directors | : | Norlia Abd. Rahman Datin Debang Anyi Khadijah Abd. Rahman |
| One of the share holders | : | Sateras Holdings Sdn. Bhd. |
| Shareholders are | : | Norlia Tun Abd. Rahman Aishah Tun Abd. Rahman Khadijah Tun Abd. Rahman Zaiton Tun Abd. Rahman Fatimah Tun Abd. Rahman Norah Tun Abd. Rahman |

MAGUARI SDN BHD

| | | |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Licence No. | : | T/0261 |
| Total forested area | : | 33,440 ha. |
| Date of issue | : | 16/11/81 |
| Directors | : | Kamal Hussien Mohd Deli Abd Rahman, Hj |

One of the shareholders is Jamil Hj Abdullah

The contractors of this holding is

SARASIN SDN BHD, which belong to

Norlia Abd Rahman

Lucy Lao Puong Siong

MOSKO LUMBER SDN BHD

| | | |
|---------------------|---|------------|
| Licence No. | : | T/3068 |
| Total forested area | : | 69,786 ha. |
| Date of issue | : | 8/5/81 |

One of the shareholders of Mosko is Gavial Sdn Bhd and shareholders of these are Mohamed Kamal Hussain and Norlia Tun Abd Rahman.

BARBET SDN BHD

| | | |
|---------------|---|---|
| Licence No. | : | T/0281 |
| Acreage | : | 68,471 ha. |
| Date of issue | : | 5/12/83 |
| Directors | : | Mokhsen Ibrahim, Hj Zainuddin Satem, Hj |

One of the shareholders is Barbettia which is owned by Puan Junaidah Zen.

SARAWTAB SDN BHD

| | | |
|---------------------|---|-------------|
| Licence No. | : | T/0137 |
| Date of issue | : | 22/1/77 |
| Total forested area | : | 104,842 ha. |

Directors are Hj Mohd Deli Abd Rahman, Hj Salleh Jafaruddin, Datuk Amar Abg Yusuf Puteh. And one of the shareholders is Tabau Enterprise, whose Directors are Hj Mohd Deli Abd Rahman, Norlia Tun Abd Rahman, Mohd Kamal Hussein, Nohd Louis Ali and Khatijah Tun Abd Rahman.

KABALA SDN BHD

| | | |
|---------------------|---|-----------|
| Licence No. | : | T/6057 |
| Total forested area | : | 1,425 ha. |

The Directors are Norlia Abd Rahman, Junaidah Zen and Lucy Lao Puong Siong and the shareholders are Lucy Lao Puong Siong and Junaidah Zen.

SYARIKAT DELAPAN SDN BHD

| | | |
|---------------------|---|------------|
| Licence No. | : | T/3071 |
| Total forested area | : | 42,255 ha. |
| Date of issue | : | 26/5/81 |

The Directors are Ali Sheikh Salim, Hj and Umar Sheikh Salim, Hj.

And among the shareholders are:

- Christa Holdings, owned by
- Mohd Kamal Hussain
- Zainuddin Satem

- Sarasin Sdn Bhd owned by
Norlia Abd Rahman and
Lucy Lao Puong Siong and
- Datuk Tajang Laing

SEBIYAU LOGGING SDN BHD

| | | |
|---------------------|---|--------|
| Licence No. | : | T/3075 |
| Date of issue | : | 1/4/82 |
| Total forested area | : | 17,549 |

Directors are Ali Sheikh Salim, Hj Fathi Hj Duet, Hj Omar Sheikh Salim.

KEHUTANAN SENTIASA SDN BHD

| | | |
|---------------------|---|---------|
| Licence No. | : | T/4152 |
| Total forested area | : | 30,070 |
| Date of issue | : | 16/6/81 |

The Directors are Salleh Jafaruddin and Hj. Mohd Deli Abd Rahman and among the shareholders are Datuk Daniel Tajem, Salleh and Sons Sdn Bhd.

BALTIM TIMBER SDN BHD

| | | |
|---------------|---|------------|
| Licence No. | : | T/3070 |
| Date of issue | : | 26/5/81 |
| Total Acreage | : | 39,229 ha. |

Directors are Wan Habib Syed Mahmud and Sharifah Rahannah Tuanku Taha. The company belongs to RFR Mahmud Holdings.

Source: The People's Mirror 12 April 1987

● The RESULTS:

N1. LUNDU (10,910)

(Malay/Melanau 35; Chinese 17; Dayak 48)%

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. Ramsay Noel Jitom (BN-SUPP)..... | 4,890 |
| 2. Datuk Haji Noor Tahir (Permas) | 3,561 |
| Majority: 1,329 | Votes cast: 8,540 |
| Percentage: 15.73% | Spoilt votes: 89 |

N2. TASIK BIRU (17,220)

(Malay/Melanau 10; Chinese 27; Dayak 63)%

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Dr Patau Rubis (BN-SNAP)..... | 6,569 |
| 2. Wilfred Rata Nissom (PBDS) | 6,152 |
| Majority: 417 | Votes cast: 12,888 |
| Percentage: 3.28% | Spoilt votes: 167 |

N3. PADUNGAN (30,882)

(Malay/Melanau 4; Chinese 93; Dayak: 3)%

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Song Swee Guan (BN-SUPP)..... | 14,499 |
| 2. Cheng Hui Hong (DAP) | 8,538 |
| Majority: 5,961 | Votes cast: 23,129 |
| Percentage: 25.88% | Spoilt votes: 92 |

N4. STAMPIN (34,937)

(Malay/Melanau 13; Chinese 81; Dayak 6)%

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. Tan Sri Amar Sim Kheng Hong (BN-SUPP)..... | 16,790 |
| 2. Sim Kwang Yang (DAP)..... | 9,724 |
| Majority: 7,066 | Votes cast: 26,745 |
| Percentage: 26.65% | Spoilt votes: 231 |

N5. PETRA JAYA (11,825)

(Malay/Melanau 76; Chinese 14; Dayak 10)%

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Sharifah Mordiah Tuanku Haji Fauzi (BN-PBB) | 6,006 |
| 2. Datuk Hajjah Hafsa Harun (Permas) | 2,696 |
| Majority: 3,310 | Votes cast: 8,811 |
| Percentage: 38.04% | Spoilt votes: 109 |

N6. SATOK (20,014)

(Malay/Melanau 73; Chinese 24; Dayak 3)%

| | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Abang Johari Tun Abang Haji Openg (BN-PBB) | 9,760 |
| 2. Dr Wan Ali Tuanku Haji Madhi (Permas) | 4,175 |

3. Abang Ariffin Abang Sebli (Bersatu)..... 84

Majority: 5,585 Votes cast: 14,139

Percentage: 40.08% Spoilt votes: 120

N7. SEBANDI (8,428)

(Malay/Melanau 74: Chinese 15: Dayak 11)%

1. Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud (BN-PBB)

4,397

2. Datuk Wan Yusuf (Permas)..... 2,203

Majority: 2,194 Votes cast: 6,658

Percentage: 33.24% Spoilt votes: 58

N8. MUARA TUANG (8,525)

(Malay/Melanau 78: Chinese 9: Dayak 13)%

1. Adenan Haji Satem (BN-PBB) 5,196

2. Abdul Rahman Hamzah (Permas)..... 1,755

Majority: 3,441 Votes cast: 7,031

Percentage: 49.50% Spoilt votes: 80

N9. BATU KAWA (17,455)

(Malay/Melanau 17: Chinese 57: Dayak 26)%

1. Chong Kiun Kong (BN-SUPP) 8,228

2. Japat anak Simol (Permas)..... 2,407

3. Lim Guan Sin (DAP) 2,041

Majority: 5,821 Votes cast: 12,810

Percentage: 54.73% Spoilt votes: 134

N10. BENGOH (15,021)

(Malay/Melanau 2: Chinese 29: Dayak 69)%

1. Sora anak Rusah (PBDS) 5,648

2. Louis Nigel Gines (BN-SUPP) 5,429

3. Chang Kuet Bui alias Rabert Abui (IND)

230

Majority: 219 Votes cast: 11,473

Percentage: 1.98% Spoilt votes: 166

N11. TARAT (13,334)

(Malay/Melanau 13: Chinese 29: Dayak 58)%

1. Frederick Bayoi Manggie (BN-PBB)..... 5,107

2. Richard Riot anak Jaen (PBDS)..... 3,994

3. Lai Boon Luan (IND) 405

Majority: 1,113 Votes cast: 9,682

Percentage: 12.23% Spoilt votes: 176

N12. TEBAKANG (16,092)

(Malay/Melanau 4; Chinese 8; Dayak 88)%

1. Michael Ben anak Panggi (PBDS)..... 7,723
2. Andrew Bujang Barieng (BN-SNAP)..... 3,366

Majority: 4,357 Votes cast: 11,299
Percentage: 39.29% Spoilt votes: 210

N13. SEMERA (8,453)

(Malay/Melanau 72; Chinese 9; Dayak 19)%

1. Wan Wahab Wan Sanusi (BN-PBB)..... 3,614
2. Wan Zainal Abidin Wan Sanusi (Permas)..... 2,779

Majority: 835 Votes cast: 6,480
Percentage: 13.06% Spoilt votes: 87

N14. GEDONG (7,451)

(Malay/Melanau 51; Chinese 8; Dayak 41)%

1. Mohamed Hillary Tawan (Permas) 3,482
2. Haji Khaider Zaidell (BN-PBB) 2,342

Majority: 1,140 Votes cast: 5,860
Percentage: 19.57% Spoilt votes: 36

N15. LINGGA (12,679)

(Malay/Melanau 24; Chinese 8; Dayak 68)%

1. Donald Lawan (BN-SNAP) 4,468
2. Datuk Daniel Tajem anak Miri (PBDS) 4,409

Majority: 59 Votes cast: 9,013
Percentage: 0.66% Spoilt votes: 136

N16. SRI AMAN (14,391)

(Malay/Melanau 19; Chinese 21; Dayak 60)%

1. Michael Pilo anak Gangga (BN-SUPP).... 5,578
2. Hollis anak Tini (PBDS) 4,762

Majority: 816 Votes cast: 10,531
Percentage: 7.89% Spoilt votes: 191

N17. ENGKILILI (7,382)

(Malay/Melanau 2; Chinese 14; Dayak 84)%

1. Sim Cheo Nam (PBDS)..... 3,839
2. Intal anak Rentap (IIN-SUPP) 2,061

Majority: 1,778 Votes cast: 6,041
Percentage: 30.14% Spoilt votes: 141

N18. BATANG AI (6,181)

(Malay/Melanau 1; Chinese 3; Dayak 96)%

1. Mikai anak Mandau (PBDS)..... 2,761

2. Nicholas Bawin anak Anggat (BN-SNAP)..... 2,020

Majority: 741 Votes cast: 4,810

Percentage: 15.50% Spoilt votes: 29

N19. SARIBAS (11,014)

(Malay/Melanau 72: Chinese 4: Dayak 24)%

1. Bolhassan bin Dee (BN-PBB) 4,620

2. Haji Zainuddin Satem (Permas) 3,184

3. Ahmad bin Johan (IND) 108

Majority: 1,436 Votes cast: 7,985

Percentage: 18.40% Spoilt votes: 73

N20. LAYAR (9,361)

(Malay/Melanau 19: Chinese 11: Dayak 70)%

1. Datuk Alfred Jabu (BN-PBB) 4,416

2. David Impi (PBDS) 2,691

Majority: 1,725 Votes cast: 7,186

Percentage: 24.27% Spoilt votes: 79

N21. KALAKA (8,904)

(Malay/Melanau 57: Chinese 7: Dayak 36)%

1. Datuk Amar Yusuf Puteh (Permas) 3,685

2. Abdul Wahab Aziz (BN-PBB) 3,608

Majority: 77 Votes cast: 7,376

Percentage: 1.06% Spoilt votes: 83

N22. KRIAN (9,010)

(Malay/Melanau 9: Chinese 9: Dayak 82)%

1. Datuk Edmund Langgu anak Saga (PBDS) 3,751

2. Peter Nyarak anak Entrie (BN-SNAP)..... 3,337

Majority: 414 Votes cast: 7,159

Percentage: 5.84% Spoilt votes: 71

N23. KUALA RAJANG (6,882)

(Malay/Melanau 68: Chinese 5: Dayak 27)%

1. Hamden bin Ahmad (BN-PBB)..... 3,251

2. Saidi Olia (Permas) 2,110

Majority: 1,141 Votes cast: 5,425

Percentage: 21.28% Spoilt votes: 64

N24. MATU DARO (11,497)

(Malay/Melanau 82: Chinese 4: Dayak 14)%

1. Wahab Haji Dollah (BN-PBB) 5,302

2. Tun Datuk Patinggi Hj Abdul Rahman Yakub (Permas)
3,677

Majority: 1,625 Votes cast: 9,112

Percentage: 18.10% Spoilt votes: 133

N25. REPOK (15,760)

(Malay/Melanau 2: Chinese 75: Dayak 23)%

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. David Teng Lung Chi (BN-SUPP) | 6,479 |
| 2. Wong Jing Nam (DAP) | 5,564 |

Majority: 915 Votes cast: 12,140
Percentage: 7.60% Spoilt votes: 97

N26. MERADONG (12,919)

(Malay/Melanau 13: Chinese 49: Dayak 38)%

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Thomas Hii King Hiang (BN-SUPP) | 5,371 |
| 2. Chong Siew Chiang (DAP) | 4,134 |

Majority: 1,237 Votes cast: 9,612
Percentage: 13.01% Spoilt votes: 107

N27. MALING (40,648)

(Malay/Melanau 8: Chinese 88: Dayak 4)%

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1. Datuk Dr Wong Soon Kai (BN-SUPP) | 19,239 |
| 2. Ling Sie Ming (DAP) | 9,858 |

Majority: 9,381 Votes cast: 29,298
Percentage: 32.24% Spoilt votes: 201

N28. SEDUAN (14,626)

(Malay/Melanau 22: Chinese 71: Dayak 7)%

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Ting Ing Mieng (BN-SUPP) | 7,023 |
| 2. Ling Heng Kwong (DAP) | 2,331 |
| 3. Eric Lee @ Lee Hie Kui (Permas) | 684 |
| 4. Lo Ngee Hock (IND) | 155 |

Majority: 4,692 Votes cast: 10,259
Percentage: 50.16% Spoilt votes: 66

N29. IGAN (7,294)

(Malay/Melanau 21: Chinese 28: Dayak 51)%

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. David Tieng Chiong Chu (Permas) | 2,425 |
| 2. Wong Soon Koh (BN-SUPP) | 2,402 |
| 3. Nalt anak Mani alias Anthony (IND) | 81 |

Majority: 23 Votes cast: 4,951
Percentage: 0.48% Spoilt votes: 43

N30. DUDONG (13,548)

(Malay/Melanau 3: Chinese 16: Dayak 81)%

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Jawan Empaling (BN-SUPP) | 4,717 |
| 2. Wilfred Kiroh (PBDS) | 4,406 |
| 3. Siew Chee Kiong (IND) | 232 |

Majority: 311 Votes cast: 9,513
Percentage: 3.41% Spoilt votes: 158

N31. BALINGIAN (11,881)

(Malay/Melanau 51; Chinese 9; Dayak 40)%

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Abdul Aziz Majid (BN-PBB)..... | 5,104 |
| 2. Wan Habib Mahmud (Permas)..... | 3,473 |

Majority: 1,631 Votes cast: 8,743

Percentage: 19.02% Spoilt votes: 166

N32. OYA (10,004)

(Malay/Melanau 68; Chinese 8; Dayak 24)%

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Wan Madzihi Mahdzar (Permas) | 4,679 |
| 2. Mohd Ghazali Kipli (BN-PBB)..... | 2,705 |

Majority: 1,974 Votes cast: 7,467

Percentage: 26.73% Spoilt votes: 83

N33. PAKAN (5,804)

(Malay/Melanau 1; Chinese 2; Dayak 97)%

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Jawie Masing (PBDS) | 2,453 |
| 2. William Mawan Ikom (BN-SNAP)..... | 2,195 |

Majority: 258 Votes cast: 4,716

Percentage: 5.55% Spoilt votes: 68

N34. MELUAN (6,483)

(Malay/Melanau 1; Chinese 4; Dayak 85)%

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Geman anak Itam (PBDS)..... | 3,135 |
| 2. Janggu anak Pengarah Pamyang (BN-PBB).... | 2,091 |

Majority: 1,044 Votes cast: 5,287

Percentage: 19.98% Spoilt votes: 61

N35. MACHAN (7,651)

(Malay/Melanau 4; Chinese 24; Dayak 72)%

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Grameng Juna (PBDS)..... | 3,426 |
| 2. Martin anak Charlie (BN-PBB) | 2,438 |

Majority: 988 Votes cast: 5,921

Percentage: 16.85% Spoilt votes: 57

N36. NGEMAH (6,285)

(Malay/Melanau 1; Chinese 4; Dayak 95)%

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Joseph anak Kudi (PBDS)..... | 2,427 |
| 2. Tan anak Seliong (BN-SNAP)..... | 2,068 |

Majority: 359 Votes cast: 4,571

Percentage: 7.99% Spoilt votes: 76

N37. KATIBAS (7,217)

(Malay/Melanau 3; Chinese 5; Dayak 92)%

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Felix Bantin anak Jibom (PBDS) | 2,624 |
|---|-------|

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| 2. Ambrose Blikau Enturan (BN-PBB)..... | 2,080 |
| 3. Kuin anak Kedal (IND) | 139 |
| Majority: 544 | Votes cast: 4,980 |
| Percentage: 11.56% | Spoilt votes: 137 |

N38. PELAGUS (8,267)

(Malay/Melanau 4: Chinese 15: Dayak 81)%

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. Phi Limon anak Nuing (PBDS)..... | 2,242 |
| 2. Kanyan anak Temenggong Koh (BN-PBB)..... | 2,226 |
| 3. Sng Chee Hua (IND) | 1,289 |
| 4. Jangi anak Peng Jemut (IND)..... | 433 |
| Majority: 16 | Votes cast: 6,289 |
| Percentage: 0.36% | Spoilt votes: 99 |

N39. BALEH (8,531)

(Malay/Melanau 0.1: Chinese 0.9: Dayak 99)%

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. James Jemut anak Masing (PBDS)..... | 3,516 |
| 2. Joseph Datuk Jinggut (BN-SNAP)..... | 2,425 |
| Majority: 1,091 | Votes cast: 6,039 |
| Percentage: 18.36% | Spoilt votes: 98 |

N40. BELAGA (5,752)

(Malay/Melanau 4: Chinese 2: Dayak 94)%

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Nyipa Killah alias Nyipa Bate (BN-PBB) .. | 2,934 |
| 2. Datuk Tojang Laing (Permas)..... | 1,501 |
| Majority: 1,433 | Votes cast: 4,531 |
| Percentage: 32.31% | Spoilt votes: 96 |

N41. TATAU (8,064)

(Malay/Melanau 19: Chinese 5: Dayak 76)%

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Daniel Sigah (BN-SNAP)..... | |
| 2. Bolhassan Kambar (PBDS) | |
| 3. Jatan anak Lintang (DAP)..... | |
| Majority: | Votes cast: |
| Percentage: | Spoilt votes: |

N42. KEMENA (20,333)

(Malay/Melanau 24: Chinese 32: Dayak 44)%

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. Datuk Celestine Ujang (BN-PBB)..... | 6,581 |
| 2. Victor Temenggong Angang (Permas) | 4,623 |
| 3. Chiew Chin Sing (DAP)..... | 2,462 |
| Majoirty: 1,958 | Votes cast: 13,803 |
| Percentage: 17.48% | Spoilt votes: 137 |

N43. SUBIS (18,754)

(Malay/Melanau 43: Chinese 14: Dayak 43)%

1. Ali bin Mana (IND).....
2. Datuk Salleh Jafaruddin (Permas)
3. Chong Kon Fatt (DAP)
4. Usop bin Wahab (BN-PBB)
5. Linggi anak Balong (IND)
6. David anak La (IND)

Majority: Votes cast:

Percentage: Spoilt votes:

N44. MIRI (31,786)

(Malay/Melanau 20: Chinese 69: Dayak 11)%

1. Dr George Chan Hong Nam (BN-SUPP).. 14,352
2. Wong Ho Leng (DAP)..... 6,079

Majority: 8,273 Votes cast: 20,585

Percentage: 40.49% Spoilt votes: 154

N45. MARUDI (12,438)

(Malay/Melanau 10: Chinese 18: Dayak 72)%

1. Edward Jeli (PBDS)..... 4,156
2. Atong anak Chuwat (BN-SNAP)..... 3,102
3. Abu Bakar bin Abdullah (IND)..... 278

Majority: 1,054 Votes cast: 7,633

Percentage: 14.52% Spoilt votes: 97

N46. TELANG USAN (9,449)

(Malay/Melanau 1: Chinese 4: Dayak 95)%

1. Datuk Balan Seling (PBDS)..... 2,878
2. Kebing Wan (BN-PBB)..... 2,644

Majority: 234 Votes cast: 5,601

Percentage: 4.24% Spoilt votes: 79

N47. LIMBANG (13,738)

(Malay/Melanau 39: Chinese 22: Dayak 39)%

1. Datuk Amar James Wong (BN-SNAP) 4,555
2. Munir bin Karim (Permas)..... 4,168
3. Thianeng anak Chuan Teck (IND)..... 271
4. Ali bin Abdullah (IND)..... 89

Majority: 387 Votes cast: 9,213

Percentage: 4.44% , Spoilt votes: 130

N48. LAWAS (9,940)

| | |
|---|-------|
| (Malay/Melanau 47: Chinese 12: Dayak 41)% | |
| 1. Tengah bin Ali Hassan (BN-PBB)..... | 3,722 |
| 2. Michael Labor Buaye (IND) | 2,912 |
| 3. Awangku Yusof bin Pengiran Bongsu (Permas) | |
| | 495 |

Majority: 810 Votes cast: 7,179

Percentage: 12.21% Spoilt votes: 50

| SARAWAK BY-ELECTION 1987 ANALYSIS | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-------------------|-----------|
| PARTIES | VALID VOTES CAST | CANDIDATES | WON | LOST |
| BN-SUPP | 117,058 (27.00%) | 14 | 11 (22.92%) | 3 |
| BN-SNAP | 34,105 (7.87%) | 11 | 3 (6.25%) | 7 |
| BN-PBB | 90,144 (20.79%) | 23 | 14 (29.17%) | 8 |
| BN TOTAL | 241,307 (55.66%) | 48 | 28(58.33%) | 18 |
| PBDS | 76,993 (17.76%) | 21 | 14 (29.17%) | 6 |
| Permas | 57,762 (13.32%) | 21 | 4 (8.33%) | 16 |
| Bersatu | 84 (0.02%) | 1 | 0 (0.00%) | 1 |
| DAP | 50,731 (11.70%) | 11 | 0 (0.00%) | 9 |
| Independent | 6,622 (1.53%) | 16 | 0 (0.00%) | 13 |
| OPPOSITION | | | | |
| TOTAL | 192,192(44.34%) | 70 | 18(37.50%) | 45 |

Computer analysis by CHEN YU

28 JUN. 1988